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WASHTENAW

JEWISH NEWS

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Antisemitism: Why now?

Hannah Davis interviews Andrew Lapin and Andy Kirshner

It may be something in the air. Two local creators are releasing pieces of media profiling prominent figures, who were also antisemites, in American history from the early 1900s.

Andy Kirshner is an associate professor at the University of Michigan School of Art and Design and the School of Music, Theater, and Dance. He has a background in music composition and theater, and has been making films for about ten years. His film, *Ten Questions for Henry Ford*, follows the ghost of Ford, whose antisemitic politics are often less well known than his automotive legacy, on a journey through modern Detroit. Andrew Lapin is an editor with the Jewish Telegraphic Agency and has been a working journalist for the last decade, including a stint as editor-in-chief of the Detroit Jewish News and a decade or so as a film critic. He is releasing an eight-episode podcast about Father Charles Coughlin, an antisemitic preacher based at the Shrine of the Little Flower in Royal Oak in the 1930s. Coughlin supported both Hitler and Mussolini and invented political talk radio as we know it today. Lapin's eight-part podcast, produced with *Tablet*, is "Radioactive: the Father Coughlin Story."

Andy Kirshner on the set of his new film Ten Questions for Henry Ford. Photo by Nick Azzaro.

WJN sat down with these two creators to talk with them about their work (interview has been edited for clarity and length).

WJN: You're both releasing projects about influential figures — influential antisemites — who were both active in Detroit in the same time period. Why do you think these stories are coming out now? Why now for these projects of yours?

Andrew Lapin: It's definitely something in the air, right? People have become very interested in the last few years in issues of fascism and demagoguery, and there has also been this effort to look at history with a more critical eye, and that, I think, is in the spirit of both our projects. For me, it was this weird personal connection that I felt, with Father Coughlin and the Shrine of the Little Flower: I grew up

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Shmita is Judaism's sabbatical year. It can be a model for tackling climate change and inequality.

Sen. Meghan Kallman, Rabbi Lex Rofeberg, originally for the JTA

We are in an era of multiple interlocking crises. From record-breaking heat waves to wildfires to water shortages, from rising authoritarianism to a pandemic rampaging across the world, it is clear that, to survive, human beings will need to make urgent, major changes to how we live.

Bold policy proposals already exist to address these problems, both nationally and in different states. Additionally, we — one of us a politician, the other a rabbi, and both progressives — want to suggest another possibility, gleaned from Jewish tradition: the ancient idea of shmita, the sabbatical year, which can guide our work in this urgent moment when everything we do matters.

Both of us are millennials, and therefore have come of age under the worst inequality since the Gilded Age — exacerbated and symbolized by a student and healthcare debt crisis. The disastrous effects of climate crisis, extinctions, displacement and environmental degradation are threatening to turn life into a nightmare for most on the planet. These problems can be traced to a global obsession with unending growth

RI State Senator Meghan Kallman

Rabbi Lex Rofeberg, cohost of Judaism Unbound podcast.

Our only chance to avoid that is to drastically re-envision our society and its priorities.

Both of us are also, in particular, *Jewish* millennials. We have, in different ways and at different points in our lives, felt called to participate in Jewish communities of learning, prayer and communal gathering. Despite our involvement in those spaces however, neither one of us learned of shmita's existence until adulthood. It is time for our Jewish spaces, around the world, to re-prioritize this sacred ritual, and apply its wisdom in concrete ways to our own times.

The word "shmita" is observed every seven years. The shmita year began on Rosh Hashanah. "Sabbatical" tends to refer to respite from work, typically in a university context. But the shmita year is slightly different. It is a collective sabbatical, a radical recalibration of society as a whole, in order to align it with

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From the Editor

Long-time WJN ad manager Gordon White is retiring

This is a long issue of the *Washtenaw Jewish News*, 36 pages. The length of the paper is determined each month by the amount of display advertising that is reserved and this month that has been driven by the return to live theater and in-person dining and shopping. Gordon White, the WJN's long-time ad manager will be retiring on a high note! Gordon has handled all business related to selling advertising space in the WJN for over 14 years, and will be hard to replace. But the time has come.

Clare Kinberg

The position of ad manager of the WJN is a good part time job, 70 to 80 flexible hours per month, for someone in our community. Is it you? Knowledge of the local Jewish, arts and entertainment, and small business and service communities are helpful as are some knowledge of marketing and graphic design. Please contact me if you are interested and want more details.

"News about news" is one of my favorite topics, so the story about the a new Jewish news source in southern California, which also mentions a new independent Jewish publication in Detroit, *Nu?Detroit*, really caught my eye. All of the new publications mentioned in the article below are digital, a different concept from what I am doing with the WJN, but we swim in similar financial and political seas. ■

A new LA Jewish news site launches amid a difficult journalism climate

Andrew Lapin, originally for the JTA

A team of journalists once employed by the flagship Jewish newspaper in Los Angeles is trying to create an alternative news source for America's second-largest Jewish community.

SoCal Jewish News announced itself last month with a GoFundMe campaign and a July 19 target launch date. Without mentioning the 35-year-old *Jewish Journal of Greater Los Angeles*, the new website emphasizes that it will be different from the Jewish news currently on offer in the city.

SoCal Jewish News is "committed to covering the entire community," the site says.

Its founding editor, Kelly Hartog, the *Jewish Journal's* managing editor until she was laid off in October, described *SoCal Jewish News* on Twitter as "a megaphone for Jewish news, all filtered through a lens of ethics, objectivity and professionalism." And a promo video announces, "You deserve a *reputable* news outlet" (emphasis theirs).

It's unclear whether *SoCal Jewish News* will get off the ground [as of October, it hasn't]. Hartog declined to speak about the venture, and others involved referred inquiries to her. Meanwhile, after setting a crowdfunding goal of $200,000, the upstart venture scaled back its target by 95% after raising just $3,000 in donations over several weeks.

SoCal Jewish News has begun publishing stories via email newsletters and social media.

"I think it would be very challenging for another group to start another Jewish publication at this moment in time," Jay Sanderson, the president of the Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles, told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency. "Competition is great, but Jewish journalism is a challenge to begin with."

Across the country, the number of journalism jobs at U.S. newspapers fell by nearly half over the last decade, according to the Pew Research Center. The *Jewish Journal's* staff has shrunk by two-thirds in the past several years since David Suissa took over as editor in chief, publisher and president in 2017 after running its business operations. In October, the paper also suspended its print edition, citing the COVID-19 pandemic.

The *Jewish Journal* is the institutional paper of the large and diverse Jewish community in Los Angeles, and a syndication client of JTA. *Journal* supporters say the staff decline and print suspension is the natural effect of a crumbling business model for local news, and Sanderson said he believes Suissa has led the paper admirably through stormy seas that included the abrupt disappearance of advertising revenue during the pandemic. Tabby Refael, a Journal freelance columnist, called Suissa "an intuitive and cherished mentor."

But a half-dozen former staffers said the staff reduction was driven by more than finances. They said that Suissa's management style alienated the staff, and that he made erratic hiring and firing decisions based on personal whims. Some staffers said they resigned over their differences with him.

Some of those critics are involved in the new venture, including Hartog, who told JTA in April that the Journal had been "the most extremely unpleasant and difficult newsroom I have ever worked in."

Other *Jewish Journal* critics said their concern is less about the paper's internal operations than about the product itself. They said the changes under Suissa's leadership have left Los Angeles Jews, particularly the politically liberal, needing something different.

Under Suissa, the paper has shifted its focus from original local reporting in favor of commentary, a shift that his critics say is disproportionately right wing. Suissa himself authors and hosts many of the *Journal* columns, podcasts and videos, and uses the space to decry progressive ideology, including in a video posted to Facebook Live last fall when he called Black Lives Matter "an anti-American movement."

A new section of the website titled "The Speech Project" aggregates an assortment of stories criticizing critical race theory and "wokeness," including pieces from right-wing outlets such as the *Epoch Times* and the *New York Post*, and has a subsection devoted to "Cancel Culture."

"I think the Jewish community is tremendously unserved by this kind of monotone or monochromatic perspective of the *Journal* in its current form," said David Myers, a professor of Jewish history at UCLA and president of the New Israel Fund who was a *Jewish Journal* columnist before Suissa took over.

Myers said he and other local community activists had been in conversation with the team behind *SoCal Jewish News* about starting an alternative publication, but that he was not involved in the new venture.

Los Angeles Jews tend to vote overwhelmingly Democratic and progressive, and the city is home to many large progressive synagogues. But the city also has substantive populations, including Orthodox and Mizrahi Jews, with more conservative political beliefs. (Suissa himself was born in Morocco.)

Rabbi David Bouskila said the *Jewish Journal* now offers a better match for his congregation, the Modern Orthodox Westwood Village Synagogue, than it did several years ago. In the Modern Orthodox and Sephardic communities, "the *Jewish Journal* previously was not very popular," he said. "I think [Suissa's] broadened the base."

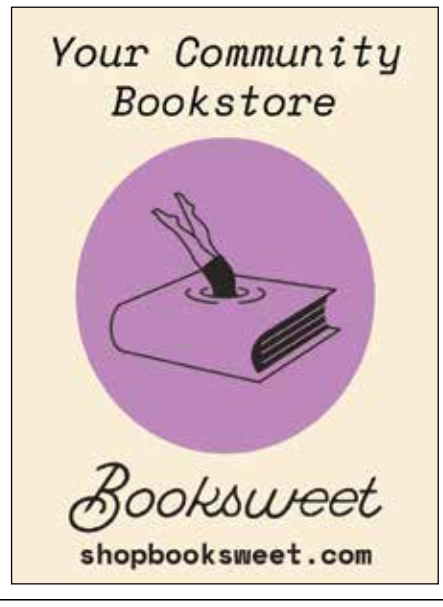
Bouskila recently joined the Journal board, along with Rabbi Lori Shapiro, who heads the transdenominational Open Temple in Venice Beach and describes herself as a political progressive.

If Los Angeles does gain a second Jewish news organization, it would not be the only American city in that position. In Minnesota, *TC Jewfolk* has seen success among younger Jews even as the Twin Cities' 109-year-old print newspaper, the *American Jewish World*, continues to publish. In Detroit, a new site for commentary, *Nu?Detroit*, launched earlier this year, though the *Detroit Jewish News* still stands.

But whether the city can sustain two publications is a question. The nonprofit group Jumpstart Labs is incubating and processing donations for *SoCal Jewish News* while the new venture seeks nonprofit status.

"We're working with *SoCal Jewish News* because we believe that it's important there be a robust and diverse press reporting on the Jewish community for it to understand itself, and the broader world to understand the Jewish community," Joshua Avedon, co-founder and CEO of Jumpstart Labs, told JTA. "Jumpstart views the L.A. Jewish community as being on the leading edge of where the Jewish community is headed in terms of its diversity and depth and creativity."

Suissa's predecessor at the *Journal*, Rob Eshman, who worked at the paper for 24 years and now is the national editor at the *Forward*, said Suissa was "the natural choice" to take over for him four years ago. He said the political bent of the paper is the prerogative of its editor — and that if community members want something else, they'll make that known. ■



WASHTENAW JEWISH NEWS

2935 Birch Hollow Drive
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48108
(734) 395-4438
www.washtenawjewishnews.org
CKinbergeditor@washtenawjewishnews.org

Editor and Publisher
Clare Kinberg

Advertising Manager
Gordon White

Design and Layout
Dennis Platte

Staff Writers
Hannah Davis, Beth Dwoskin, Lonnie Sussman

Contributing Writers
Sue Adler, Leslie Bash, Orge Castellano, Rabbi Aharon Goldstein, Shira Hanau, Rachel Hartman, Floki Ivey, Meghan Kallman, David Zvi Kalman, Ron Kampeas, Rabbi Will Keller, Jillian Luciow, Chuck Newman, Rachel Ringler, Rabbi Lex Rofeberg, Liora Rosen, David Rullo, Greg Saltzman, Margaret Schreiber, Jacob Singer, Caroline Strauss, Kan Wachsberger Rachel Wall, Teddy Weinberger

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JCC receptionist beautifies with origami

Sue Adler, special to the WJN

Carine Lutz sits at the front welcome desk of the Jewish Community Center of Greater Ann Arbor. During COVID days, she was looking for something to keep her busy for multiple shifts in an empty building waiting for the phone to ring. She remembered her days doing origami and thought it might be a fun project to decorate our empty Amster Gallery art walls and front desks.

Carine Lutz at work at the JCC

Her origami interest began at age six when a Japanese neighbor started to teach the neighborhood children the skills at her kitchen table. Later, fifteen years ago, she needed something to do while listening to a five hour "Live At the Met Opera" with her favorite singer David Daniels. She checked out a library book on how to do origami and designed a mobile of cranes for her kitchen window which is still hanging.

When COVID hit, Corine decided to try her art hands again to beautify the walls of the JCC rather than feel what she called "COVID crabby." She began with a leaf decoration and butterflies that have been updated to cranes and a variety of flowers in vases. She has used bright colored paper from Staples, but also used coffee filters dyed with food coloring. During the recent Jewish holiday of Sukkot, she built a fairy sukkah to display in front of the building next to the mums that she and her husband Mark planted. She remembered the customs of this holiday from her many years working at the Early Childhood Center when the students and teachers would build full-sized sukkahs to celebrate the holiday.

All her hard work during COVID has created beautiful, bright walls for all to enjoy.

Thank you Carine! ■

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JFS gearing up for Afghan refugee resettlement

Ken Wachsberger, special to the WJN

The calamitous withdrawal of U.S. troops after twenty years in Afghanistan provoked a frenzied flight of refugees from the Taliban-ruled country. Now, the United States is gearing up to accept an influx of over 90,000 Afghan refugees in the next 12 months.

Michigan alone has agreed to take in up to 1,300, halting and sharply reversing the downward plunge of refugee resettlement during the Trump years. Major resettlement services leading the statewide effort include St. Vincent's Catholic Charities Refugee Services (300 refugees in the Lansing area), Bethany Christian Services (250 in the Grand Rapids area), and Samaritas (350 in west Michigan and metro Detroit).

An Afghan woman arrives in Kosovo after fleeing Kabul, Aug. 29, 2021. (Armend Nimani/AFP via Getty Images)

Resettlement in Washtenaw County

In Washtenaw County, Jewish Family Services is leading the local drive to settle up to 300 Afghans. Three Afghan cases have already been resettled and another 20 cases are in the pipeline, according to Shrina Eadeh, Director of Resettlement at JFS. More are being added weekly. Most will arrive in the next few months. "Case" is a generic term that can refer to one individual or a family.

Eadah says, "We have been notified that the majority of Afghans on the bases who have been vetted will leave the bases mid-October. So, we will soon see a larger number arrive in our community."

To accommodate them, "We have been busy finding housing, seeking community support in the form of donations both funds and in-kind, and speaking with our local partners, like our schools and medical clinics, to ensure we are all aware of what we will need to do and can obtain the resources we need."

Housing is the recurring challenge that dominates Eadeh's concerns. "There are a lot of misconceptions that landlords and rental management companies have about renting to refugees. However, with our incredible employment and post-resettlement team, we work hard to ensure everyone we place in housing gets on their feet quickly and can meet their rental obligations with our support."

Refugees Face (Mostly) Welcoming Climate

Eadeh praises the local social and political climate that facilitates the task. "We are not able to do the work we do without the support of our community. We work with local congregations, social service agencies, volunteers, our county and city officials, property management companies, schools, public benefits offices, medical clinics, and so many more."

In particular, she thanks the Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation, United Way of Washtenaw County, and the Song Foundation for the special grants they provided to support JFS's resettlement efforts.

"Aside from what happened on the UM campus and a few disturbing phone calls and emails from individuals not in support of the work we do, our community has been overwhelmingly supportive, and we are so grateful for them."

At the University of Michigan, stickers saying "Afghan Refugee Hunting Permit" and sporting the logo of the white terrorist group the Proud Boys were recently discovered scattered around UM's West Hall.

She lauds the help the various resettlement agencies in Michigan have received from state and local government. "The State of Michigan has spoken with us about resources we may need and also has advocated for us on a higher level for those resources. Our local government agencies are also reaching out to us in consideration of how they can be supportive of our work. We very much appreciate all of their efforts."

Talking Hard Dollars

JFS's approach to resettlement is based on their holistic service model, "which means a 'one-stop shop': mental health services (including translation/interpreting), transportation, nutrition, ESL, volunteer engagement and management in support of refugees, and a wide range of economic empowerment and employment services. By providing wrap-around services, we enable refugees to obtain employment quickly, so they can be more independent and meet their financial obligations. We also do our best to help them feel truly supported during this incredibly daunting transition. The vast majority of support services are not covered by resettlement funds, but are absolutely critical to the success of resettlement work."

The effort to raise necessary funds is jumpstarted by the one-time payment of $1,225 each refugee is given from federal resettlement funds to get them through their first 90 days in this country. The funds are used, Eadeh explains, "to pay for rent and utilities, and, if there is anything left, we pay for needed household or personal care items."

However, seldom is anything left. "We try to maximize these funds by using donations we receive to help obtain any other items people need."

How Can You Help Locally?

More donations are needed.

To begin, if you own rental property or know anyone who does, "We are in desperate need of housing that can be rented to the Afghans and refugees we resettle and funds to support all of the services we provide for resettlement: specialty food pantry, transportation, behavioral health, and more."

She is grateful to the volunteers who have reached out and want to begin helping right away, and asks for their patience. "Similar to 2016, when we received a record number of Syrian refugees, we will need hundreds of volunteers. However, it takes time to create this system and, as we face arrival numbers that we've never seen before, we know we'll need a lot of help. We just need our volunteers to give us a moment to come up with the best process for their engagement. Our goal is to ensure that their experience is meaningful and rewarding."

She urges patience with much-needed in-kind contributions as well. "We have to be strategic in what items we need right now and how we can best utilize our local partners, such as thrift shops, Salvation Army, and Kiwanis. Management and storage of in-kind donations is a costly and time-consuming operation. We have to be mindful and strategic in selecting the items we actually need and have the ability to store."

Always near the top of the list are cleaning supplies, personal care items, and household items, as well as gift cards from, for instance, Visa, Meijer, Kroger, and Target.

For more information and updates about what JFS is doing and how you can help, you can follow them on Facebook and Instagram, subscribe to their newsletter, or read their website at https://jfsannarbor.org/resettlement-integration-services/. ■

Ken Wachsberger is an author, editor, and book coach. His latest book is You Have the Time: How to Write and Publish That Book in You.

Scientist David Julius, whose grandparents fled antisemitism in Czarist Russia, wins Nobel Prize in medicine

Shira Hanau, originally for the JTA

David Julius, a professor of physiology at the University of California, San Francisco, whose grandparents fled antisemitism in Czarist Russia, was awarded this year's Nobel Prize in physiology or medicine. He shared the award with Ardem Patapoutian, a molecular biologist

and neuroscientist at the Scripps Research center.

The Nobel Prize committee cited Julius and Patapoutian's research "for their discoveries of receptors for temperature and touch," which have improved treatments for pain caused by a range of diseases.

Julius was born in 1955 and grew up in Brighton Beach, which was then home to a large population of Russian Jewish emigres. Julius described the neighborhood as "a landing pad for Eastern European immigrants like my grandparents, who fled Czarist Russia and antisemitism in pursuit of a better life."

A graduate of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the University of California, Berkeley, Julius has spent his career researching the way human senses like touch, pain, and heat function and has used capsaicin, the chemical in chili peppers that makes them burn, to explore how human nerve endings feel heat.

"These breakthrough discoveries launched intense research activities leading to a rapid increase in our understanding of how our nervous system senses heat, cold, and mechanical stimuli," the Nobel Prize committee wrote in its announcement of the winners. ■

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Judaic Studies students summer adventures

Jillian Luciow, special to the WJN

Judaic Studies students at UM used their summer funding grants from the Jean & Samuel Frankel Center to participate in research, summer programs, and internships.

Pavel Brunssen

Emily Anfang

Marina Mayorski

Undergraduate Judaic Studies major Emily Anfang received funding for two virtual summer internships. One was as a communication and marketing intern for Ella Judaica, a small family-owned Judaica company in Los Angeles. The second internship was with the Galicia Jewish Museum in Krakow, Poland, working on the Jan Szancer exhibition, an interactive children's program about the life of a Polish-Jewish illustrator, and an exhibition on Richard Ores, a compilation of interviews and relics from a Holocaust survivor and his American descendants.

Pavel Brunssen is a PhD student in the Department of Germanic Languages and Literatures and is also pursuing a graduate certificate in the Frankel Center for Judaic Studies. After co-editing a volume and film on antigypsyism, *Antiziganismus und Film* (2020, Heidelberg University Publishing), and publishing his first monograph with the German publisher Beltz Juventa titled *Antisemitismus in Fußball-Fankulturen: Der Fall RB Leipzig* in April 2021, Brunssen received funding to help with associated costs of his summer dissertation research in Germany. His research focuses on analyzing the relationship between histories, memory cultures, and identities in European soccer.

Brunssen was invited to give a keynote lecture at a conference entitled "Changing the Chants" at the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum where he gave a presentation on "Antisemitism in European Football" on August 31.

Marina Mayorski is a graduate student in the Department of Comparative Literature and the Frankel Center for Judaic Studies Certificate Program. Mayorski works in translation of Russian, Yiddish, and Ladino with an interest in modern Jewish literature, specifically popular literature such as romance novels and murder mysteries. This past summer, Mayorski participated in the YIVO Summer Yiddish Program. Through the program, she was able to develop her Yiddish skills, converse with a diverse group of people in the program, and further her interest in Yiddish. She now plans on continuing her study of the language in Paris and looks forward to incorporating the Yiddish skills developed during the YIVO program into her own research. ■

The cruse of holy oil within us

Rabbi Aharon Goldstein, special to the WJN

This year Chanukah begins on Sunday, November 28, and we light the first candle that night. We find something interesting in the Talmud and Gemara. They tell the story of Chanukah and the big miracle that we are celebrating, which is the fact that they found, in the Holy Temple, a single cruse (a small vessel for holding liquid) of oil that was still completely sealed with the official seal of the High Priest and they were able to use that oil, even though it was only enough for one day, for eight full days!

Rabbi Aharon Goldstein

As has been discussed in the past, there were a couple of miracles: First, to find it, and second, to find it still sealed. Then the Talmud adds an important point; that the seal was from the High Priest.

The question is, what is the most important thing here? When they found an unbroken, sealed cruse of oil, it wasn't so much that it was sealed by the High Priest, the important thing was that the seal wasn't broken. Even if it was from a simple Kohen it would have been just as valid to use because the seal was not broken. So why does the Talmud have to tell us not only that the seal was unbroken but it was the seal of the High Priest? This is supposed to teach us a lesson — something unique — by emphasizing that this was the unbroken seal of the High Priest.

Every story in the Talmud that we learn is not only on the physical/practical level but also on a symbolic level. So here we have to say, when we speak about the situation of Chanukah, we speak about the threat that the Jewish people had from the Greeks — that they should forget that the Torah was from God and not to follow the commandments of God. So to protect us from these Greek influences we need to have at least one cruse of oil with an unbroken seal to assure us that it is pure. From that one unbroken seal, a pure cruse of oil, we can light the menorah until we are able to process and obtain new oil. When we say that it was an unbroken seal — like we said before that the emphasis here is that the High Priest's seal was unbroken — this is what we need to protect us in a situation like Chanukah. We needed the unbroken seal of the High Priest and from there we can overcome all of the threats that we were getting from the Greeks.

What is so special about the High Priest? One thing is that the High Priest's entire occupation and presence was only in the Holy Temple. All day, from the morning to the night, he was in the Temple. He only left at night or for a short amount of time during the day to be with his family. But he had to remain in Jerusalem all of the time. He could never leave Jerusalem. So what does the High Priest symbolize? It symbolizes the connection of a Jew to holiness all the time. Therefore, he had to be in Jerusalem for the entire day. Actually the word "Jerusalem" is a combination of two words — Yira and Shalom — complete awe from God. This is supposed to symbolize that the High Priest had complete awe from God, a pure awe from God that protected him all the time.

When the Greeks came into the Temple and ransacked it they managed to disturb the holy Altar and to contaminate all the holy oil. But the holy oil that was sealed by the High Priest remained undisturbed and whole. Once they had this one cruse of oil from the High Priest, they were able to light all the other candles and protect themselves from these influences that the Greeks were trying to have on them. So this war that the Jewish people had with the Greeks can also be viewed as a war that we have on a personal level, that every Jew has in their own self. On one hand there are influences that are trying to pull them away from God. But at the same time, we say that every Jew has a soul and this soul is the candle of God — as the verse says. The oil is supposed to symbolize wisdom and the dedication to God — and this is the symbol of the war that was between the Jewish people and the Greeks. The Greeks were after the "oil" of the Jewish people in order to contaminate it: in other words, to contaminate their connection to God. Here they were not successful in contaminating all of the oil — there was one cruse that was left and that was the essence of every Jew, that essence remained intact. Even though the "Greeks" can be successful in throwing doubts into one's mind regarding their connection to God, the essence of a Jew was always connected to God — that seal was never broken. It's always complete and that is what keeps them connected to God.

Therefore, when a person is in a situation which is perceived as threatening, such as the assault of the Greeks, in which they are losing their sensitivity to holiness and when it comes to something spiritual the holiness is not felt. What must be done is to look within the self, look for the cruse of "oil" that has the unbroken seal of the High Priest. That is supposed to symbolize that at the essence of every Jew there is a constant connection to God that remains pure. We just have to tap into that essence and that will overcome and prevent us from being affected by the "Greeks." Sometimes we can be in a situation where we don't have this feeling which is similar to a person sleeping. The person is still very much alive but they are not conscious of their life. Here is where a Jew has to wake up and tap into their connection to God which is the cruse of oil with the seal of the High Priest that will return them to having a good feeling towards God and to be active with their practice of Judaism. Like the High Priest never leaving Jerusalem shows that he is constantly connected to holiness, so every Jew has this "High Priest" within themselves just waiting to be tapped into and that will reconnect them to God and prevent them from being influenced by the "Greeks".

With this thought in mind, may we merit to have a meaningful, spiritual, en"light"ened and Happy Chanukah! ■

Shmita 5782

By Teddy Weinberger

This new Jewish year of 5782 is a shmita year. The land is supposed to lie fallow during a sabbatical year, in part so that human beings don't get to the point where they think that they alone are responsible for the success of their efforts (an impious, hubristic position that the Bible refers to as "the might of my own hand," Deut. 8.17).

Teddy Weinberger

For Jews living in the Land of Israel (produce from land outside of Israel is exempt), shmita is an incredible statement of faith, though one perhaps more appropriate for an agricultural society.

This is my fourth shmita year in Israel. For my first three, the non-religious elite were content to laugh amusedly at the craziness of the religious (who argue amongst themselves whether it is better to eat imported produce or Israeli produce that uses a rabbinic loophole similar to one used on Passover: just as on Passover one can have hametz in a designated place if one has sold it to a gentile, so if farmers sell their land to a gentile they can continue to farm). This shmita year is different.

Haaretz, the unofficial voice of the secular elite, has found a shmita issue over which it can cry "religious coercion" — a huge bugaboo in Israeli society. No, no one is forcing secular Israelis to not eat their vegetables this year. The problem comes in public landscaping.

The religious would prefer that Israel's municipalities not violate shmita laws (which also pertain to ornamental trees, bushes, and flowers in public spaces). According to these laws, existing trees may be cared for, but new projects and the planting of spring flowers are forbidden. In an article on September 1, *Haaretz* reported that in a response to its query of 21 municipalities, only one, Ramat Ha-Sharon, "said that planting will continue as usual." Haaretz writes that major municipalities like Tel Aviv, Ramat Gan, and Netanya will do likewise but "are afraid to say so publicly." The article ends, though, by minimizing the effects of the municipalities observing shmita, quoting a former forestry official who said: "You plant a lot the year before and also the year after. The problem today isn't tree planting [during shmita]; nowadays, trees are planted in every public project. The problem is protecting existing trees. That's the country's most serious problem."

Haaretz's editorial, published two days later under the provocative title "It's Also Jewish to 'Choose Life,'" was a lot more critical of the shmita situation: "Originally shmita was meant to serve environmental and social values — giving both the land and human beings time to rest and recover. Nowadays, it has become another coercive rule that undermines the social and environmental values of adapting cities to human life in the modern era." The editorial ends stridently: "Agriculture Minister Oded Forer and Environmental Protection Minister Tamar Zandberg must demand that the chief rabbis find a halakhic solution to enable tree-planting to continue. In addition, mayors must come to their senses and announce that they intend to keep planting."

The *Haaretz* article had noted that six years ago Rabbi Eliezer Melamed, a leading national-religious rabbi, ruled that "planting for infrastructure purposes could be permitted in certain cases if the planning couldn't be done before shmita, as long as the gardeners aren't Jewish." This seems to be just the "Halakhic solution" demanded by *Haaretz's* editorial; however, it is a solution largely acceptable only to modern, rather than to ultra-Orthodox, Jews. Here, as is the case with all issues concerning religion and state, Israel's democracy has to consider the extent to which it will honor the most stringent positions of Orthodox Jewish law. What should be done? There are no magic solutions, but as we head into the winter months, it strikes me that my experience as a recreational swimmer could be helpful in thinking about municipal landscaping and gardening during shmita. In the struggle between those who like the water warmer with those who like the water colder, a good pool manager knows the following: If no one is completely happy, then the water is being heated to the correct temperature. Happy Winter! ■

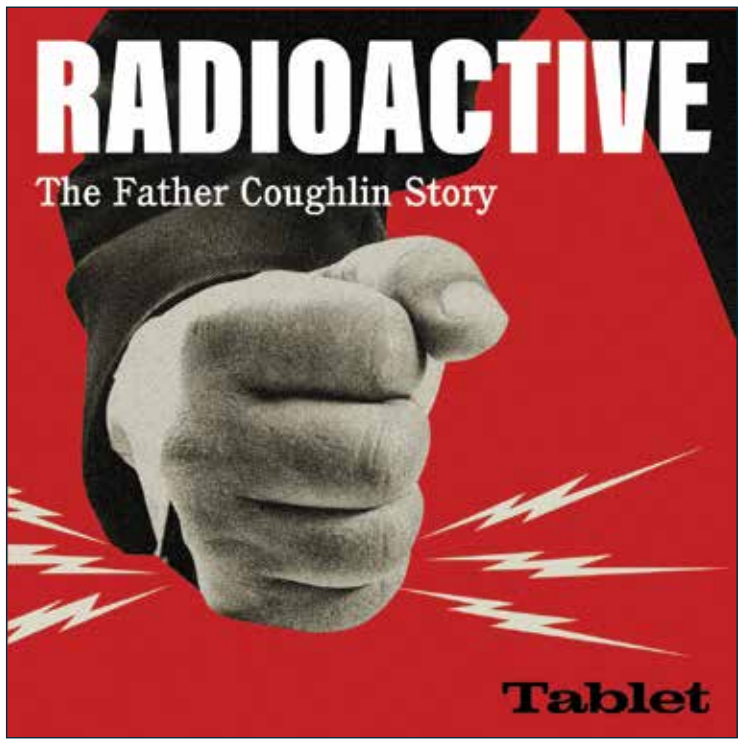
Antisemitsm: Why Now ? *continued from page 1*

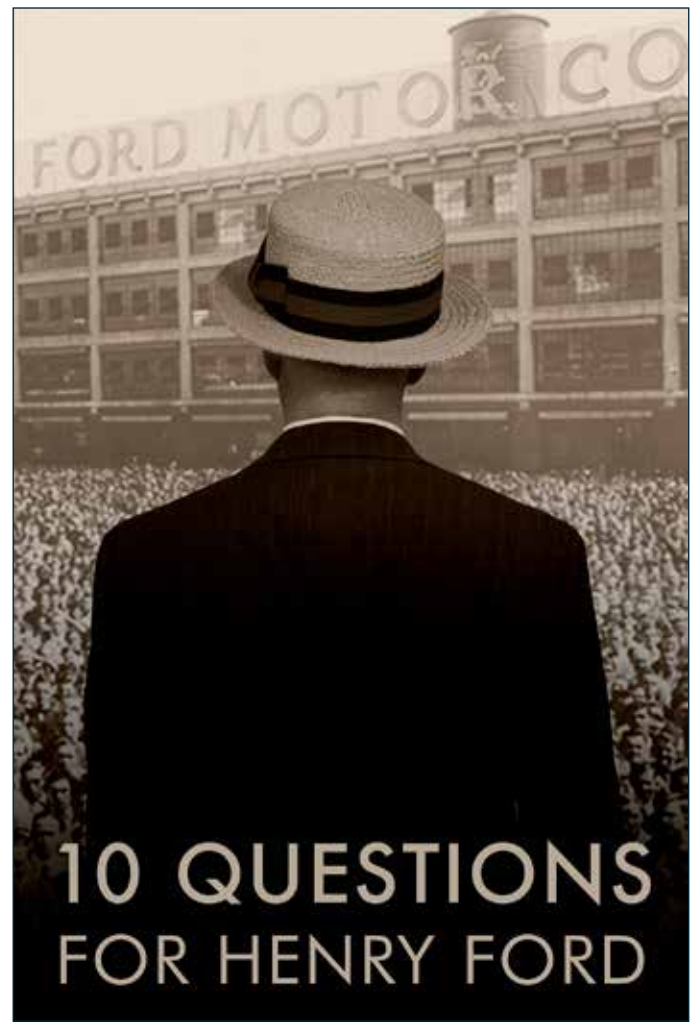
maybe a mile from the church, so growing up, I knew his story and was always surprised to find people did not really know who he was or what he wrought on this country. So this was a journey for me to understand him through a modern context. So many things happening in the present day were eerie reminders or direct echoes of the kinds of things Coughlin did 80 years ago. I thought it was important to revisit that today.

Andy Kirshner: This time that we're in right now, where you have this authoritarian, right-wing, populist, and anti-immigrant movement in the country, that was also true in the 20s and 30s. Jews were the Mexicans and Guatemalans of the time. They were the aliens who were going to destroy Anglo-American civilization, according to people like Ford and Coughlin. So there are those parallels. And as Andrew mentioned, there is the local connection: everywhere you go in Michigan, it's Henry Ford something or other. [laughs] It's the Henry Ford Museum, the Henry Ford Hospital, the Henry Ford Freeway, the Henry Ford whatever. And I found, as Andrew did: everybody has heard of Ford, but a lot of people don't know his full story, that he was also an antisemite, he was anti-labor, and he even accepted a medal from Hitler. In that same spirit of addressing history in a more honest manner, I felt it was important to try to tell the whole story. Michigan also has this weird history of being at the center of a lot of right wing movements. It was Coughlin and Ford, and it was also Gerald L. K. Smith, and militia movements, and the resurgence of the KKK.

WJN: So why is it always happening in the Detroit area? [laughs] What's going on there?

AL: Detroit was the hot place to be at the dawn of this new economic era in America. Everyone wanted to move here for work, it was on the forefront of innovation not only in automobiles but in a lot of other areas, a lot of that spurred by Henry Ford. That population growth was something Father Coughlin fed off of. As the fortunes of Detroit changed drastically, the threat represented by these movements and the ways they capitalized on society sort of metastasized around that. So when people are in economic despair in Michigan, that's when they turn to militias. While I was at the Detroit Jewish News, I interviewed the former head of the biggest neo-Nazi movement in America, which had earmarked Detroit as a prime recruitment spot because of how many people were out of work following the bankruptcy. So if you look at the long history of the last century, it was both a place of immense cultural importance and a place that feels like it is abandoned by the powers that be. All of which creates a kind of proving ground for populist, racist, and antisemitic theories.





AK: Detroit during the Depression was a real center for left-wing movements as well, so there's a sort of action-reaction thing going on. Between 1880 and 1924, the composition of society was radically changing. In 1920, Detroit was maybe 5% African-American, and millions of Jews came to America in this time period. So people like Henry Ford who grew up in white Protestant Dearborn, they're looking around and the world is changing in front of their eyes. It may be similar to what's happening now in places like Arizona and Florida and Texas where the demographics are changing and there's this kind of backlash that happens.

AL: The race and class experience across Michigan is a huge part of this. Detroit has historically been one of the most segregated cities in the country, and the ruling white class often bulldozed Black neighborhoods and otherwise ripped apart the fabric of lower income society. You also get these pockmarks of rural white poverty across the rest of Michigan, which tends to be where militias get their start. I often say that Michigan is all of America in one place, for better and worse.

WJN: Both of your pieces of media rely so much on music and audio to set the scene. How do the media formats you have both chosen inform, assist, and constrain the story?

AL: For me, using a podcast was totally crucial to the goals of my project, which was to really put you in the headspace of someone who would have been listening to Coughlin's radio show in the 1930s. You can hear his voice, the pattern of it, the way he delivers his proclamations. We use a lot of the original music from his radio programs, the church hymnals, because that was how he packaged himself. I want my listeners to be thinking about why someone you hear over the radio or consume in some other piece of media would be so compelling that they can shape your entire belief system. I also saw the internet and social media as being the radio of the modern era, this new form of communication, barely regulated, that is a home for a lot of Coughlin-esque figures to find an audience. So there was a clear parallel to make there that we also wanted to establish through using a podcast.

AK: What actually got me started on the project was a book called *Fordlandia*, by Greg Grandin. Ford had this rubber plantation in the Amazon called Fordlandia, where he built a main street and a white clapboard chapel and all the trappings of a Midwestern village, right in the jungle. He was trying to enculturate his indigenous Amazonian workers by teaching them to square dance. And so I originally had this idea that I was going to do a musical, set in the Amazon with people square dancing! The concept morphed, but I stuck with the idea of square dance as being the central metaphor. It was this cultural imperialism, and also it was really quaint and weird. I found articles in Ford's newspaper, *The Dearborn Independent*, where he talked about how the Nordic square dances are the best, and how lately there've been all these dances coming in from the Congo, corrupting civilization, but he has this plan to restore the traditional dances, get away from "jazz sex dancing" and return to good old American whatever. Ford had a full time dance master on the payroll, and he had a ballroom in the Ford engineering plant, he had his executives square dance as part of their job. So in the film the ghost of Henry Ford, played by John Lepard, dances at various times: in front of the old Model T plant in Highland Park, in his barn all alone, and when he is accepting a medal from Hitler. So it's just this weird surreal thing, but I worked with choreographer Debbie Williams, and John was totally down to learn how to do these kookie dances, and we got the old Henry Ford dance manuals — he and his wife published these books, "Henry Ford Shows You How to Dance." The source material from the score is tunes by Stephen Foster, the first American commercially popular songwriter, who was a composer of beautiful nostalgic sentimental ballads, and also the composer of virulently racist minstrel songs. So that seemed particularly appropriate since Ford revered Stephen Foster. So you have these two sides of Ford, this sentimental guy and then this horrible racist guy at the same time. You wouldn't think square dancing would be racist, but you find a way.

AL: Radio too: as a technology, the first big hits were racist minstrel shows, that's what Coughlin was building off of as well.

WJN: A lot of articles came out during the Trump era profiling neo-Nazis or Trump voters and talking about why they held their beliefs, why they voted the way they did, that tended to come off very sympathetic. I'm curious if that's something you were both aware of as a risk factor going into your projects. Because you're humanizing these subjects but also trying to convey the horror along with the humanity.

AL: While for me Coughlin is definitely the protagonist of the show — you're following him as he accumulates fame and power and ultimately loses it all — I was never worried about making the audience sympathetic to him inadvertently, because it's pretty clear from the outset that he's a horrible person and we don't really give him any quarter in that regard. But horrible people still have dreams [laughs] and ambitions, and I think there's some value in understanding what those are. I take a lot from Hannah Arendt's idea of the banality of evil: people are not monsters, they are people. It's not like they came from outer space, they grew up in the same landscape as you and me.

AK: I did want to complicate Henry Ford, I didn't want to make him a total villain or a total hero. He has this certain kind of charm to him, he's this farm boy who early in his career was taking on some of the big powerful business interests and so forth, he has this populist thing going on, and he likes square dancing, he likes birds. There's something charming about him. I wanted the movie to be something where you could be alternately charmed by him and repelled by what he did. You know, I think in some ways the film is best described as a tragedy. If you think of Henry Ford as King Lear, even at the end of *King Lear* you still feel sorry for him when his daughter is killed. And so one of the main stories in the film is

about Henry Ford's relationship with his son Edsel. There was all this mutual love between the father and son, but it was ultimately a destructive relationship for both of them. So I was interested in how we can destroy the people we love as a broader theme. And this relationship between Henry and Edsel in some ways reflects larger struggles going on in society, with Edsel being pro-labor, not a bigot, patron of the arts, Henry for having no use for art, being a bigot, being very anti-labor.

Andrew Lapin, photo courtesy Anna Megdell.

AL: It was important for me to understand how people who listened to Charles Coughlin would have found him charming, and would have seen him as the truth teller. Regardless of whatever doctrines he held in his heart, he was able for a time period to project an outward appearance of trustworthiness. Obviously he was a priest, people took religious inspiration from him, and he delivered a lot of messages that resonated with a lot of people. I think you get into trouble when you just write off people like him and anyone who follow him as "deplorable," like if you don't really want to understand what's going on there, then you're just kind of setting yourself up for a future that you also don't understand.

WJN: Do you feel like there's an overarching philosophy to the work you are doing, from past work to these new pieces?

AK: I've always kind of been interested in exploring social and historical issues through the media of dance, film, theater, music, and the written and spoken word, and themes of race and identity. And I'm attracted to these iconic figures in American culture and history. So I did a piece years ago that was based on the life of — or the iconography of — Frank Sinatra, where I played an aging crooner named Tony Amore, and he's giving farewell concerts one after another and never quite leaves the stage. But that was a piece where it was a lot about masculinity, it was about Frank Sinatra representing American masculinity to people. So, Sinatra, Ford, these are iconic American figures that give us this sort of window into the American psyche.

AL: I think in a general sense I'm certainly fascinated by media and the arts as tools for mass communication and the ways that people interact with them, how those things reverberate across society. But that might also just be a bit high-falutin'.

WJN: Andrew, you did an interview with *Jewish Currents* when you were editor at the *Detroit Jewish News*, and talked about the generational tension you saw in the Jewish community, a feeling in older Jews that younger Jews don't really understand the fear and vulnerability that come from being close to the Holocaust. Was that something that informed your work here?

AL: Yeah, that's very true. My career has centered around Jewish journalism over the last few years, and that was a central tension I noticed when I was at the *Detroit Jewish News*, the completely disparate reactions I would get from Jews in the older generation and in the younger generation. For this project, I'm sort of trying to reach multiple generations at once: there are older folks who, if they don't remember Father Coughlin himself, they remember their parents reacting to him. And that places us on a timeline that can incorporate perceptions of the Holocaust and about a time when antisemitism was so prominent in the world. And now, because it's also in a new media format, and because it's touching on a lot of parallels to what's been going on here over the last couple years, that's also energizing a younger generation of Jews and also non-Jews to engage with this work.

AK: So I'm a little older than Andrew — my father fought in WWII and he was Jewish. His memory of the Holocaust was very present. When I started working on this project I was talking to my in-laws about it, who are Jewish and who grew up in Detroit, and heard Father Coughlin on the radio, and Henry Ford was kind of notorious among Jews. There was this informal boycott of Ford cars by Jews that continued for quite a long time. And you know, I didn't know any of that stuff, and contemporaries of mine, both Jewish and non-Jewish, they've often had the reaction of, "I didn't know any of this stuff about Henry Ford. I just knew like, Greenfield village! Cars! Henry Ford hospital!" That part of the legacy. So it's kind of amazing, really, the way that history kind of gets deep-sixed, not very long after.

AL: Over the course of my project I talked to current Shrine parishioners as well as current employees of the archdiocese of Detroit who did not know about Father Coughlin, did not know about his antisemitism. Maybe they had heard of him, but didn't know any of this. Whereas, like, every Jew in Detroit probably knew who he was! So that's definitely, there is something interesting there, some divide in two different cultures.

WJN: So what's next for you both?

AL: I'm just trying to get to the end of the [eight part] podcast. It will all be out at some point and I will take a big breath. Haven't really thought beyond that.

AK: It's pretty consuming when you're trying to roll something out there, because you feel like there's this window you have to let people know about it, and you're also trying to finish it, which I still am! Also my wife, Stephanie Rowden, is a sound artist, and we're actually talking about all the things that got left out of the Henry Ford film that I couldn't fit in 67 minutes, particularly some of the weirder stories. We're thinking of doing a podcast — we started going around to some of these sites in Michigan that we wanted to research more. Somehow, there's this feeling that Henry Ford can take you back to every thread in American history in one way or another.

The first episode of the podcast "Radioactive: The Father Coughlin Story" is available on podcast streaming services: find it at https://www.tabletmag.com/podcasts/radioactive. *10 Questions for Henry Ford* will premiere at the Ojai Film Festival on November 6, and afterwards will be available for a limited streaming run from November 9–14. Find out more at https://www.henryford-questions.com. ■

Shmita is Judaism's sabbatical year, continued from page 1

principles of justice and equity for human beings and for the lands we inhabit. Shmita offers a framework for how we might enshrine seemingly individual choices as social values.

The shmita year has two major components. The first is that it serves as a rest for land: Just as humans get to observe a sabbath once every seven days, the land that we inhabit gets a sabbath, too. In biblical times, it meant that the land should lay fallow for a year, and the gleanings left for the needy and even animals. Through shmita, our relationship to land can shift from one of control and domination to one of *appreciation and interdependence*. Clearly, such lessons are applicable to this moment as well.

Shmita's other major component is that debts are forgiven. This is done to address financial inequities that grow over time, and to enable everyone to have the opportunity to thrive. Debt forgiveness every seven years disrupts wealth-hoarding, and provides relief to those struggling to meet their basic needs. Shmita approaches justice expansively.

These ideas can be, and should be, used in practice — not just in our ancient texts, and not just aspirationally. For instance: we could forgive debts, and change the systems that cause such terrible indebtedness. Two-thirds of contemporary U.S. bankruptcies are over medical issues and medical debt; we must make healthcare free and universal to solve this problem over the long term. Collectively, U.S. college students owe nearly $1.6 trillion in student loan debt; President Biden could and should forgive up to $50,000 per borrower in federal student debt through executive action. Over the medium term, we must make public colleges and universities free, to avoid re-creating the same problem — something that our home state of Rhode Island is already on its way to doing. This year, its General Assembly permanently enacted RI Promise, the free tuition program at the Community College of Rhode Island.

The idea of shmita can also guide us in acting to avoid the most catastrophic effects of climate change. Shmita proposes that for a year, humans must avoid treating land simply as a means to our ends; we must not think in terms of limitless expansion, but rather in terms of sustainability and rest. Leaving the land fallow rejects the notion that our planet, and its resources, exist only to serve us.

Our state's Act on Climate bill sets legally binding targets for emissions reductions; now we must act urgently to meet them. Measures like mandating net-zero emissions in energy generation, a critical move that passed only the Senate this session, are crucial first steps. We need to rebuild our food systems, and expand public transit and clean energy production. Neighborhoods are building community gardens while offering training for formerly incarcerated people, rethinking financial systems, and experimenting with basic income. Communities and legislatures are mobilizing around these issues, but we need more action, faster, and at every level.

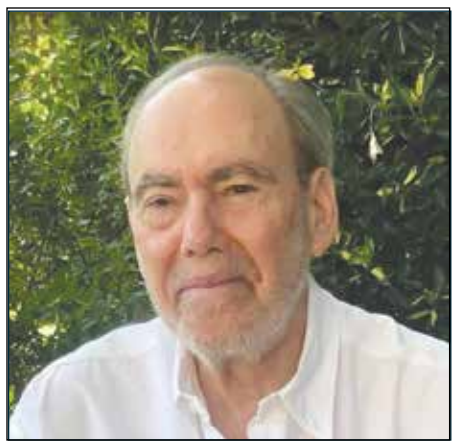
The choices we make now will determine the survival of millions within the next few decades. We must seek out every strategy available to us as we take on the challenges that threaten the inhabitants of our country, other countries, and our planet. That includes strategies anchored in ancient wisdom, like the shmita year. We need to act collectively, for everyone's health. Because a society that takes care of itself and its most vulnerable is one that is, quite simply, the only moral option. ■

The Newmans of South Africa: Poker shark, counterspy, apartheid fighter, medical researcher

By Chuck Newman

Editor's Note: Chuck Newman hosts a biweekly series of "Conversations," presented by the Jewish Cultural Arts and Education department of the Jewish Community Center of Greater Ann Arbor. The talk-show format of the Zoom presentations highlight Chuck's easygoing style and deep curiosity about science, politics, and connections between our local environment and the world. You can find this interview and other previous shows at https://jccannarbor.org/event/conversations

My grandfather, Charles Newman, emigrated from Kandava, Latvia, to America in 1890 to avoid serving in the Russian army and for greater economic opportunity. His brother Sydney immigrated to South Africa in 1902 for the same reasons. This article is based on my interview of my great uncle



Stan Newman

Sydney's grandson Stanton (Stan), the medical researcher. From Stan, I learned the amazing stories of his grandfather the poker shark, and his father Elliot, a Jew in Nazi Germany and an assassin.

In elementary school I was allowed to take the ostrich egg my uncle gave us to school for "show and tell." My uncle obtained the egg on a visit to South Africa where he had gone to meet his cousins, aunts, and uncles. As an adult I wanted to make contact with this branch of my family but no one knew how to contact them. I did have copies of some of my uncle's 49-year-old correspondence with the South African relatives. An internet search on their names yielded nothing but I did find a list of the board of directors of the Capetown Reform Jewish Temple. One of them directed me to a local genealogist who found Sydney's descendants for me which eventually led me to Stan with the help of other family members.

Grandfather Sydney initially supported himself by buying horses and selling them to the British army. That led him to found Premier Livestock Exchange and the first department store in Windhoek South West Africa, now Namibia. Subsequently, he had a money-losing farm in Southwest Africa that he kept solvent by going to Capetown to play poker to cover the losses.

Stan recently found a stash of letters written by his father, Elliott, describing his trip in 1937 to Germany and Latvia to meet his mother's family. Tragically, they all subsequently died in the Holocaust, at the hands of the Latvians.

While in Germany, Elliot had attended a Hitler rally in Olympic Stadium where he observed and reported on the hold Hitler had on the German people and his fear for the fate of his family. The windows of the train he took through Germany were covered to keep passengers from viewing the war preparations. He also noticed and commented on the Brownshirts patrolling the train who didn't want Germans to see the food available to foreign passengers that was unavailable to them because of Germany's "Munitions before butter" policy.

Elliot was able to surreptitiously take and hide pictures of the bridges over the Kiel Canal that he gave to British Intelligence. Elliot took credit for the fact that the first bombing raid of Germany by the British Air Force targeted those bridges.

Many of the Afrikaner citizens of South Africa (predominantly descendants of Dutch settlers), having lost two wars to the British, sympathized with the German cause. Elliot, however, volunteered for the South African Air Force in WWII and fought in North Africa as a bomber navigator until he was recalled to serve in counterintelligence.

While serving in counterintelligence, he arrested "B.J." Vorster, who subsequently served as both the Prime Minister and President of South Africa, for operating a pro-German radio station.

He participated in the assassination of a German spy observing allied shipping off of the coast of Mozambique. With some of his colleagues, he tracked the spy's movements and killed him one evening by ramming his vehicle with a truck with a concrete slab in front before scurrying over the South African border.

Stan and his father Elliott were both their universities' class presidents and active in the anti-apartheid movement. They met and worked with leaders of the movement including Steve Biko, who was at the forefront of a grassroots anti-apartheid campaign known as the Black Consciousness Movement. Stan was harassed and received death threats because of his activism, but continued to stay active until the leadership of the Movement transferred to Black leaders. Stan then felt free to take advantage of advanced educational opportunities in London.

Stan has had a distinguished career as a researcher and administrator including as the Dean of Health Sciences at the City University of London. He was known as "an excellent Dean and mentor. Outstanding researcher and author. An inspiration to all academics!" He's a prolific author and has co-authored 20 books including The Human Jungle with his wife Susan Lonsdale.

His research covered many fields including facilitating better outcomes for patients with chronic diseases and cardiac surgery. It was known that some patients had cognitive problems after cardiac surgery. Stan's team found that bits of matter were entering the brain during surgery by using technology developed to detect Russian submarines.

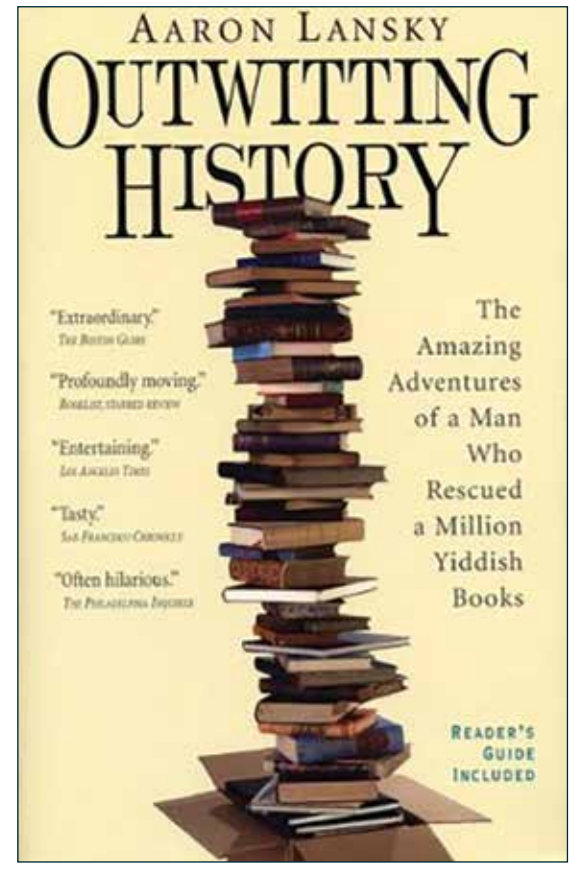
The international impact of Stan's work was illustrated by the fact that after he appeared on my talk show Conversations he received an email from a viewer from Ann Arbor saying "I had no idea you were the Stanton Newman who contributed so much to the literature of cognitive dysfunction following cardiac surgery."

More about Sydney, Elliott and Stanton view Stan's fascinating interview can be found at https://jccannarbor.org/event/conversations. ■

A book group for people of the Book

By Greg Saltzman

Jews sometimes are called "people of the Book," referring to the Torah. Books, interpreted more broadly, are the focus of the Ann Arbor Reconstructionist Congregation book group. We have met since 2014, about eight times per year, discussing a different book each time. AARC book group meetings are open to members of the local Jewish community regardless of whether they belong to AARC.



Besides the intellectual stimulation of reading and discussing books, the AARC book group helps provide a sense of community and connection among the participants. Before COVID-19 forced us to meet via Zoom, our meetings began with tasty food (my wife, Audrey, loves feeding people). May the pandemic end soon and the tasty food return!

Many of the books we discussed recently won National Jewish Book Awards. For example:

Max Gross, *The Lost Shtetl*, a novel about a hidden Jewish village in Poland that escaped the Shoah.

Colum McCann, *Apeirogon*, a novel based on a true story of an Israeli and a Palestinian who each lost a daughter to violence related to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict but nevertheless reached out to each other to build peace.

Yossi Klein Halevy, *Like Dreamers: The Story of the Israeli Paratroopers Who Reunited Jerusalem and Divided a Nation*, a nonfiction account following the lives of seven Israeli soldiers from 1967 to more recent years.

Michael David Lukas, *The Last Watchman of Old Cairo*, historical fiction based on Solomon Schechter's discovery of a treasure trove of Jewish documents in the Cairo geniza.

Rachel Kadish, *The Weight of Ink*, a novel about a Sephardic Jewish woman in 17th century England who chafes at restrictions on women's education.

Helene Wecker, *The Golem and the Jinni*, a novel about the immigrant experience in New York around 1900, with a twist: one of the immigrants is a golem.

I've also loved some Jewish-themed books we've discussed that did *not* win National Jewish Book Awards, such as:

Sophie Judah, *Dropped from Heaven*, short stories about Jews of India.

Lucette Lagnado, *The Man in the White Sharkskin Suit: A Jewish Family's Exodus from Old Cairo to the New World*, a family memoir of the experiences of a prosperous Jewish family forced to flee Egypt after Nasser took over.

We discussed several books that did not have specifically Jewish themes:

J.D. Vance, *Hillbilly Elegy*, a family memoir of the experiences of working-class Appalachian whites, which helps explains some of the political support for Trump.

Mohsin Hamid, *Exit West*, a novel about war refugees that was a finalist for the Booker Prize.

A special treat was a discussion led by AARC member Jonathan Cohn, a journalist, of his book, *The Ten Year War: Obamacare and the Unfinished Crusade for Universal Coverage*. It's not often that the author himself leads a discussion in a small book group.

AARC's rabbi, Ora Nitkin-Kaner, has led the discussion for one meeting each year of the AARC book group. In 2021, her session focused on Bryan Stevenson, *Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption*, a nonfiction account of unfair treatment by the criminal justice system of those who are impoverished or Black.

Previews of coming attractions:

On Sunday November 7 from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., we'll have a Zoom discussion of Aaron Lansky's *Outwitting History: The Amazing Adventures of a Man Who Rescued a Million Yiddish Books*. This is a memoir of Lansky's efforts (for which he later won a MacArthur Award) to rescue old Yiddish books before they were discarded in dumpsters. It also provides some insight into Yiddish culture in Canada and the United States.

On a yet-to-be-determined Sunday in December, from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., we'll have a Zoom discussion of Yehuda Avner and Matt Rees's *The Ambassador*. This is an alternative history novel that assumes the British government implemented the 1937 Peel Commission recommendation to partition Palestine into two states, one Jewish and one Arab. The novel tells the story of the Israeli ambassador to Nazi Germany who desperately tries to save as many Jews as possible from being murdered by the Nazis.

If you would like to be added to the email distribution list for AARC book group announcements and Zoom links for our meetings, then please email me at gsaltzman@albion.edu. ■

Social workers and Sukkot

By Caroline Strauss

A sunny, warm day at the end of September in Ann Arbor offers a rare opportunity to hold classes outside. When my School of Social Work professor had such an opportunity, it couldn't be passed up. As a master's of social work student, we spend a lot of time in the building's courtyard, which is where we decided to have class.

Coincidentally, that is also where my classmates in the Jewish Communal Leadership Program, a program within the school of social work, had just built our sukkah. I suddenly and unexpectedly got to put into action some new skills and concepts.

Our theme this year for the JCLP Sukkot celebration was Welcoming the Stranger. A key aspect of the holiday, welcoming the stranger, also happened to be what we were talking about that day in class. As we got ready to begin class, many of my classmates, and even my professor, were curious about what the large structure with tree branches and leaves on top was. I decided that since the topics that would be discussed in class and the theme for our Sukkot event aligned, I would give a brief overview of the holiday and how Jews celebrate Sukkot.

After I explained the holiday of Sukkot, we had a conversation about times we each felt a stranger and were welcomed, and times we welcomed strangers. The examples varied from inviting someone to eat, to being welcomed into a new school or learning environment, and even to being welcomed into a foreign country. These stories were full of friendship, gratitude, and appreciation, and it was great to hear that everyone had a story to share.

Community members at the JCLP Welcoming the Stranger Sukkot event

We then wrote these examples on paper chains and strung them across the sukkah, so that anyone who entered could read about the times we were strangers and the times we welcomed strangers. We hoped our stories would inspire others to think of similar times in their lives.

The Sukkot value of welcoming the stranger lines up with important concepts in social work.

The next afternoon, the JCLP annual Sukkot event took place in the courtyard. While guests mingled, enjoying a delicious meal catered by Amanda's Kitchen, they could also read the stories my social work classmates had left on the sukkah decorations.

Social workers are often strangers entering a new community. It is our job to do a deep dive into the community in which we are working, learning about their past, structure, and who makes up the community. We learn to recognize that communities are often close-knit, and may be hesitant to the idea of a stranger, the social worker, coming in. While the intention of social work is to help the community we are going into, we learn that we may be met with hesitance. We must remember to be respectful and eager to learn about the community in order to successfully do our work.

In other situations, social workers will be among those who are welcoming newcomers into a community. Being a stranger and being a welcomer are important parts of both social work and of Sukkot.

Discussing these themes also inspired me to think about tzedakah. The value and practice of tzedakah is often thought of as strictly monetary, but I consider both the idea of social work and welcoming the stranger to be acts of tzedakah. Teaching other social work students about Sukkot just so happened to combine both of those. So, the next time you see a stranger, think about welcoming them in some way — you never know what will happen! ■

Teen mental health and resilience

By Jacob Singer

The Lior Project is pleased to present a free webinar, "Teen Mental Health and Resilience," on Wednesday, November 17, at 7:30 p.m. This program will feature Rabbi Yarden Blumstein, a teen mentor for mental health who empowers teens to support one another in school and elsewhere.

LIOR PROJECT

SHINING A LIGHT ON COMMUNITY WELL-BEING

Rabbi Blumstein directs UMatter, a division of Friendship Circle of Michigan that focuses on teens struggling with mental health challenges. Under his guidance, UMatter operates with a peer-to-peer model of teens helping one another overcome stigma and other obstacles related to mental health.

Rabbi Yarden Blumstein

The November 17 presentation will address the meaning of resilience, the difference between crisis response and long-term therapeutic care, how to ask for help, and how to respond to someone asking for help.

This event is intended for teens and the adults in their lives, such as parents, guardians, and educators. To register for the free webinar, please visit www.jfsannarbor.org/lior and scroll down to Community Events.

The mission of the Lior Project is to increase awareness of, dialogue about, and support for issues of mental health, addiction, and suicide in the Washtenaw County Jewish community. The Lior Project exists to help reduce stigma, promote inclusivity, and enhance community support. Coordinated by Jewish Family Services of Washtenaw County, with participation from many local Jewish organizations, the Lior Project is generously supported by the Jewish Women's Foundation of Metropolitan Detroit and the Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor.

To learn more about the November webinar and the Lior Project, please visit www.jfsannarbor.org/lior. If you have additional questions, please email Jacob Singer at jsinger@jfsannarbor.org. ■

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TBE returns to in-person learning

Special to the WJN

On Saturday, October 2, Temple Beth Emeth's Terri A. Ginsburg Religious and Hebrew School opened the school year with a return to in-person learning in their building on Packard Street after more than a year of virtual programming. With nearly 200 students spanning ages 3 to 18 participating over the weekend, TBE leaders recognize how desirous many families are to return to in-person learning. Those nearly 200 students represent a growth of more than 35% over last year, and they come very close — over 90 percent — to matching their pre-Covid program participation. Planning for all those students, most of whom are under 12 and are therefore not yet eligible for a COVID-19 vaccine, presented a number of new challenges for TBE staff, who place the health and safety of their community above all.

"We're thrilled to be back in person," said Director of Education Rabbi Daniel K. Alter. "We know how tough being on Zoom was for everyone last year, and we're doing everything we can to uphold the health and safety of everyone in our community, which enables us to return to 3D learning! We've done our best to follow the science and to listen to what our families tell us about their comfort levels."

Rabbi Alter shared many of the new policies and protocols that guide TBE's Religious and Hebrew School programming decisions, which are posted on TBE's website. In addition to mask requirements for everyone and vaccine mandates for all faculty and staff, TBE has upgraded its HVAC system to meet or exceed the CDC's recommendations for ventilation and filtration. When a missing filter delayed the project's completion, TBE postponed the first days of school by a week.

"We've had to make a number of changes this year in light of COVID precautions ... In addition to having all music classes and tefillah experiences outside, we're also encouraging our teachers to utilize our outdoor spaces for as long as the weather allows," Alter explained.

TBE's school year usually includes a variety of special programming, a combination of special Shabbatot, field trips, family learning, and visitors. For now, though, much of that is on hold. Once all their students are able to receive a COVID-19 vaccination, TBE intends to reinstate many of those beloved opportunities.

"Still, we're optimistic. We put our annual camp retreat on the calendar, near the end of the school year, hoping that by the time spring 2022 comes, it will be safe for us to have it," said Alter. "The camp retreat is such a fun weekend. I'm already looking forward to it."

On that first Saturday, TBE's new Vice President for Education and Youth, Stephanie Chervin, came to witness the excitement. "I was happy to see TBE grounds abuzz with energy as families, students, and teachers gathered to kick off a new year of learning. I am grateful for the creativity and wisdom of everyone involved in planning for this year, and I know that because of their dedication, our youth will develop meaningful connections to their Jewish faith."

TBE has not abandoned virtual learning entirely, though. "Many of our families really liked the Zoom option, especially for midweek Hebrew School. That's why, this year, we are offering families a choice," said Alter. "Families can sign up to participate in person on Sundays or via Zoom on Wednesdays. So far, it's about a 50-50 split."

"As Jews, we adapt to whatever the world throws at us. Jewish education is no different. We're looking forward to a great year!" ■

TBE Events in November

Events and services are both in-person and virtual. Please see www.templebethemeth.org for full details and links.

Families with Young Children Tot Shabbat
Fridays at 5:45 p.m.

Shabbat Service
Fridays at 7:30 p.m.

Saturday Shabbat service
Saturdays at 10 a.m.

Daily morning blessings
Daily at 9:15 a.m.
Join Rabbi Whinston each morning for a short morning blessing.

Daily afternoon blessings
Mondays through Thursdays at 3 p.m.
Join Cantor Hayut each afternoon for a short afternoon service.

Adult B'nai-mitzvah classes
Mondays at 6 p.m.
To join the class, or for more information, contact Cantor Hayut.

Women's Torah study
Mondays at 7:30 p.m.
Join Cantor Hayut in an in-depth study and lively discussion of the week's Torah portion. This year, the group will focus on exploring passages that have informed rituals of modern Jewish life.

Twenty-five-minute mindfulness with Jewish spiritual director Linda Greene
Tuesdays at 8:30 a.m.
Zoom room opens at 8:15 a.m. for optional check-in. Blessing and intention setting 8:30–8:35 a.m. Meditate 8:35–9 a.m. Start your day centered and connected.

Talmud Tuesdays with Rabbi Alter
Tuesdays at 11 a.m. or 8 p.m.
Both meetings discuss the same material. Join Rabbi Alter to discover the Talmud, the formative collection of stories and discussions that defined the post-Temple Judaism that continues today! Together, explore the foundations of our contemporary Jewish ethics, beliefs, and practices, as well as some tremendous tales about our ancient rabbis!

Weekly Mahj
Weekly on Tuesdays at 7:30 p.m.
Weekly on Wednesdays at 1 p.m.

Meditation with Claire Weiner
Wednesdays at 5 p.m.
Join Claire Weiner for a 40-minute meditation session

Jewish Prayer: Finding Our Way into the History, Meaning, and Spirituality of our Worship Service
Thursdays at 10:30 a.m. or 7:30 p.m.
Both meetings discuss the same material. Join Rabbi Whinston for an ongoing exploration of the individual prayers that constitute the majority of our worship, from Shabbat to High Holy Days.

Biblical Book Club with Cantor Hayut
Thursdays at 11 a.m.
Join Cantor Hayut to read and discuss books of Jewish interest a few chapters at a time. This year, the book group will be reading primarily, although not exclusively, works by Israeli authors. For more information or questions, please contact Cantor Hayut.

Back Door Food Pantry
Thursdays, 4 to 7 p.m.

Shabbat morning Torah study
Saturdays at 8:50 a.m.
Join us for this weekly discussion of the Torah portion led by Rabbi Whinston.

Spirituality Book Club with Cantor Emerita Annie Rose
Tuesday, November 2 or Thursday, November 4 at Noon
Both meetings discuss the same material. Join Cantor Emerita Annie Rose in an exploration of spirituality through discussions of four fascinating books throughout the year. Contact Annie Rose at cantorannie@gmail.com to join and for more details.

Hanukkah Cookie Baking and Decorating Event
Sunday, November 28 at 2 p.m.
Join Rabbi Whinston to bake and decorate Hanukkah cookies in person. More details to come.

A Conversation with Scott Ellsworth, Historian and New York Times Bestselling Author
Monday, November 30 at 7:30 p.m.
Scott Ellsworth is the New York Times bestselling author of *The Ground Breaking: An American City and Its Search for Justice* (2021 National Book Award longlist) and *Death in a Promised Land*, his accounts of the 1921 Tulsa race massacre. Formerly a historian at the Smithsonian Institution, he has written about American history for the *New York Times,* the *Washington Post*, and the *Los Angeles Times*. He is also the author of *The Secret Game* (2016 PEN/ESPN Award for Literary Sports Writing) and *The World Beneath Their Feet*. Dr. Ellsworth lives in Ann Arbor, where he teaches in the Department of Afroamerican and African Studies at the University of Michigan. ■

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Frankel Events

November 2021

Go to lsa.umich.edu/judaic for more information.

"I Know Who Caused COVID-19": Pandemics and Xenophobia

Sander Gilman, Emory University
Zhou Xun, University of Essex
November 8, 9 am
Register at: https://myumi.ch/Axw1y

Magic and its Malcontents: Historiography as Heresiology

Shaily Shashikant Patel, Virginia Tech
November 11, 4 pm
Register at: https://myumi.ch/4pxv3

Religion and Materiality: Re-thinking a Complex Relation from the Angle of Food

Abrahamic Vernaculars Series, Fall 2021
Birgit Meyer, Utrecht University
November 12, 3pm
Link: email anthro.exec.secretary@umich.edu

Padnos Public Engagement on Jewish Learning: "When Patronage was 'Matronage': How Jewish Women's Money Supported the Early Jesus Movement"

Shayna Sheinfeld, Sheffield Institute for Interdisciplinary Biblical Studies (SIIBS)
Date and Time TBA

All events are free. If you have a disability that requires a reasonable accommodation, please contact the Frankel Center office.

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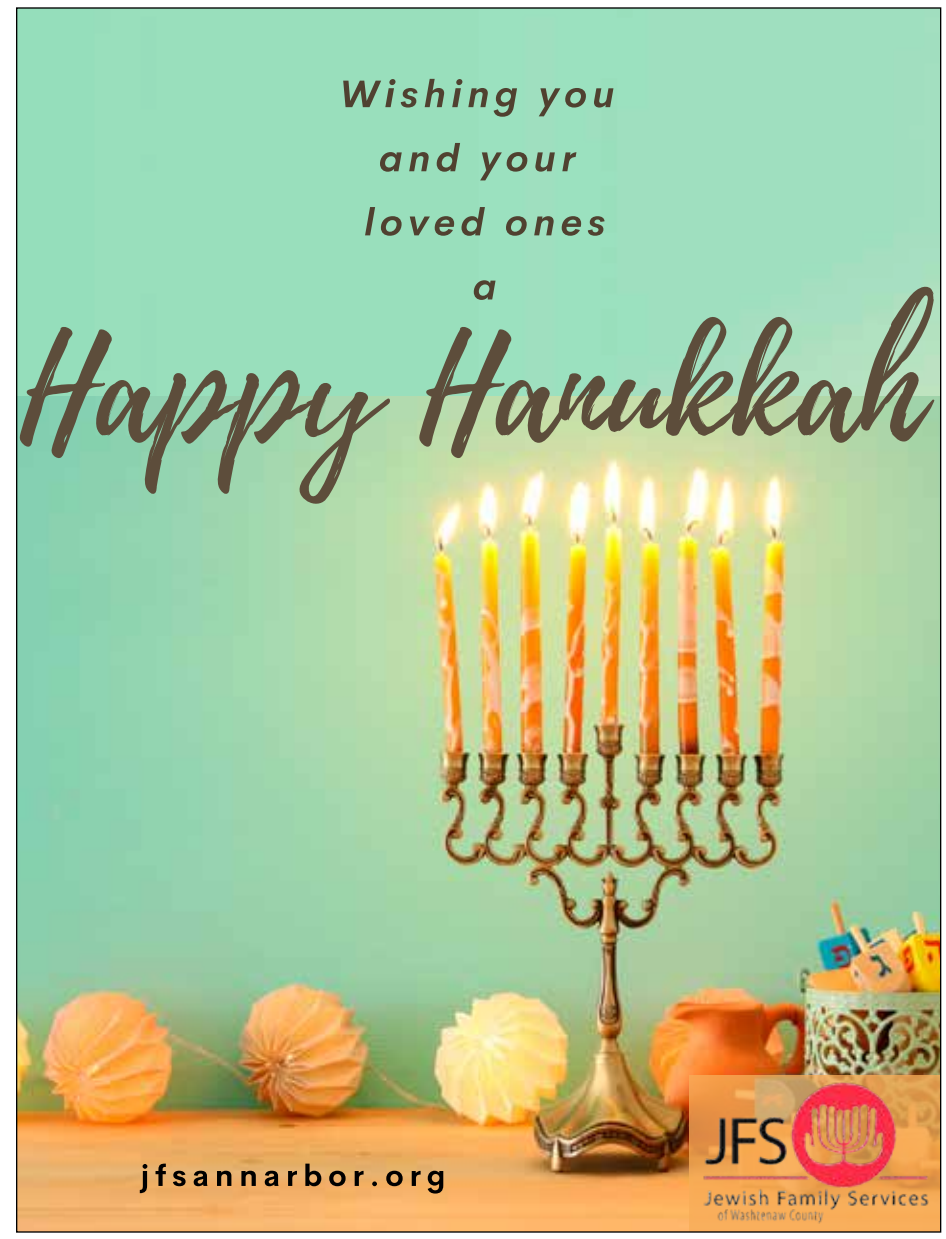
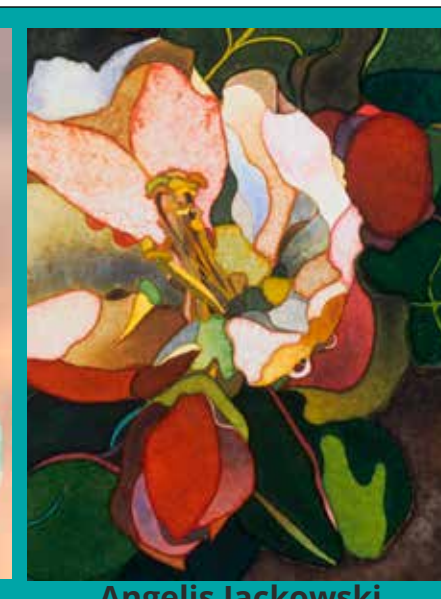


Idelle Hammond-Sass

Zemyck Pottery-Pat Cowan

Carol Furtado



Angelis Jackowski

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Confused about the LIFE & LEGACY® program? Here are some answers!

By Margaret Schreiber

LIFE & LEGACY is a program of the Harold Grinspoon Foundation that assists communities across North America through partnerships with Jewish federations and foundations, including those in Ann Arbor, to promote a culture of long-term philanthropy in the community. The after-lifetime gifts made through the program come together to build endowments, which will provide financial stability for Jewish day schools, synagogues, social service agencies, and other communal entities.

Through training and monetary incentives, this 4-year partnership program motivates Jewish organizations to secure legacy gifts, keep donors involved long-term, and integrate legacy giving into the philanthropic culture of the Jewish community.

Ann Arbor kicked off the LIFE & LEGACY program on September 1, 2020. In the past year, questions have arisen about how this program works. The following is an attempt to clarify and help community members better understand the program.

Background

Unlike most fundraising efforts, the focus of LIFE & LEGACY is not on raising money *now*, but for the future. Financial advisors warn that if 20% of a non-profit's operating budget is not coming from their endowments by 2030, then the organization will face significant fiscal challenges. Harold Grinspoon realized that organizations in the Jewish community were not taking advantage of endowment growth opportunities, and so started this program to encourage them to take steps for their own long-term sustainability.

Eleven Jewish communal organizations in Washtenaw County are participating in the LIFE & LEGACY program. They all have metrics to reach, which are tied to monetary incentive grants that they may use however they like. It should be noted, however, that there is no minimum amount of money that the groups need to collect.

Who can participate in LIFE & LEGACY? Does one need to be wealthy?

No. Someone who lives a modest lifestyle and is consistently making moderate charitable donations to their favorite organization is a perfect candidate to be a legacy giver in this program. There is not even an obligation to disclose the amount of the gift prior to one's death. In fact, many legacy donors choose to leave a percent of their estate instead of a dollar amount. This means that some members of our community may leave $1,000 legacy gifts, and some may leave $100,000 legacy gifts, and beyond. There is a wide range of giving options, which makes this program very equitable to participate in. Anyone can be a legacy giver.

What is a "Letter of Intent" (LOI)?

A "Letter of Intent" (LOI) is a very simple, non-legally binding form where a community member declares "I intend" to make an after-lifetime gift to one Jewish communal organization — or more — in the greater Ann Arbor area. Beyond basic contact information, the form does not ask the donor for any specifics on the gift they intend to leave; if one wants to leave a gift but has no idea how to do it, it's not a problem. A donor can declare their intent up front with plenty of time to decide how they do it and how much to give. That said, if the donor does know these details, they are able to indicate the giving vehicle (e.g. life insurance policy, will, trust, or retirement account) and amount on the LOI form. The most important piece of the LOI is that the donor affirms their intention to make legal arrangements for the legacy gift within 12 months of signing. Notice it is not asking for *payment* within the next 12 months, nor anytime in the immediate future. The program is asking for an *after*-lifetime gift. In each of the first two years of the 4-year program, participating organizations are tasked with securing 18 "Letters of Intent" for their organization.

Do donors need to disclose the amount they will be providing in their legacy gift?

No. This is not like an annual campaign where there is a fundraising goal, and money is collected yearly. This is a grassroots effort to increase endowments within the Jewish community. It is inclusive of anyone, regardless of their financial wealth. The program is focused on after-lifetime gifts so that meeting one's own basic financial needs in the present is no longer a barrier to being charitable. This opens the opportunity to make a legacy gift to those who feel they cannot afford to be charitable during life. For example, a donor may amend her will so that she leaves 90% of her estate to her family, and 10% to whichever LIFE & LEGACY group(s) she chooses, without worrying about the exact amounts.

Is there a regular bill sent out? Where does the money go?

There is no billing in legacy giving. When a legacy donor dies, their estate sends the legacy gift money to the organization(s) the donor chose in their "Letter of Intent." Then, the organization puts the money into an Endowment Fund, which is held by the Jewish Community Foundation of Greater Ann Arbor. The local Jewish Community Foundation is administered by the Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor.

How much money is each organization trying to collect?

Unlike a capital campaign, there is no set amount organizations need to collect. Instead, there is a very long-term goal of collecting after-lifetime payments from each donor. Those payments are put into an endowment fund so that money continues to grow into the future.

Did all 11 participating organizations in Washtenaw County meet the goal of securing 18 promises ("Letters of Intent"/LOIs) in the first year?

Yes. Four organizations secured 18 letters, and seven reached the stretch goal of 25 LOIs. Thank you to those in our community who made a promise to leave a legacy gift by signing a Letter of Intent. You helped the organizations you support reach their goal and earn an incentive grant, which will be paid to the organizations by the end of 2021. Groups that reached 18 LOIs will receive $5,000, and those that reached 25 will receive $7,000. These grants can be used however the groups see fit. The second year began on September 1, 2021, and the organizations are already hard at work securing 18 more LOIs by August 31, 2022, which will qualify them for another round of incentive grants.

Who pays for LIFE & LEGACY?

This program is a combined effort between the Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor and the Harold Grinspoon Foundation (HGF), a national leader in making investments in the future of the Jewish community. Funding for the program, including incentive grants of $5,000–$7,000 for each of the 11 participating organizations, comes directly from the Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor's budget. One third of the cost is offset by the HGF.

If the first two years are focused on securing "Letters of Intent," what happens in Years 3 & 4 of the program?

In the third and fourth years of the program, the community focuses on formalization of these promises. Donors are asked to formalize their giving arrangements within 12 months of signing a "Letter of Intent" (LOI). Volunteers from each participating organization work with LOI signers throughout years 3 and 4 to help them with the formalization process. Donors will be asked to sign a "Gift Confirmation" form to affirm they have indeed formalized their gift by making changes to a retirement or life insurance policy, will, or trust. As with collecting "Letters of Intent," each organization will receive incentive grants for collecting signed "Gift Confirmation" forms.

What is a LIFE & LEGACY Coordinator and who pays for the position?

The Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor employs a LIFE & LEGACY Coordinator, whose job is to oversee the entire community's implementation of the program, as directed by leadership from the HGF. The HGF professionals guide our local Ann Arbor area community through each of the four years of the program, drawing on years of experience in communities across North America. The Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor pays two-thirds of the cost of the program, and the HGF covers the final third. The LIFE & LEGACY Coordinator for greater Ann Arbor is Margaret Schreiber.

What is Donor Stewardship, and how does it relate to LIFE & LEGACY?

Stewardship is an important part of the HGF LIFE & LEGACY platform which encourages participating organizations to develop a culture of gratitude and connection to their legacy donors. When a community like Ann Arbor agrees to participate in the program, they agree to follow HGF's recommendations regarding donor stewardship. Stewardship helps organizations maintain a strong relationship with donors over the course of the donor's life, which makes it more likely for the donor to honor their commitment of an after-lifetime gift.

At its core, stewardship is about connecting with donors on an individual level. It may involve a telephone call to a donor just to say hello, a holiday greeting card, or in-depth updates on the organization. Stewardship can also come in the form of gifts, which can be small tokens of appreciation from the organization to the donor. For example, local participating groups have dropped off gifts of baked goods, apples & honey, plants & seeds, Shabbat candles & challah, and even Zingerman's gift certificates to the homes of their legacy donors. In addition to individual contacts, the HGF encourages a large annual gathering to celebrate the anniversary of a community's participation in LIFE & LEGACY. Of course, due to COVID, this recommendation had to be adjusted for the first anniversary, which took place this fall. The Ann Arbor community held a virtual appreciation event at the end of October instead of an in-person gathering. Any donor who made a legacy commitment in the first year of the program received an insulated picnic basket filled with kosher prosecco and other treats delivered to their home. The HGF works with the community's LIFE & LEGACY Coordinator to make sure that donors receive this type of stewardship to make it a meaningful event.

How do I get involved in LIFE & LEGACY?

The HGF is helping local communities learn how to transform philanthropic giving to include all levels of givers, and also to include cultivating donors over years and years — until an after-lifetime gift is realized! Because of the HGF, the greater Ann Arbor community is transforming how we think about philanthropy and long-term financial sustainability. For more information, please contact Margaret Schreiber at The Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor at (734) 773-3538 or email margaret@jewishannarbor.org.

You can also reach out directly to any of the following participating community organizations: Ann Arbor Orthodox Minyan, Beth Israel Congregation, Chabad House, Eastern Michigan University Center for Jewish Studies, Hebrew Day School of Ann Arbor, Jewish Community Center of Greater Ann Arbor, Jewish Cultural Society, Jewish Family Services of Washtenaw County, Temple Beth Emeth, and University of Michigan Hillel. ■

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Women of Temple Beth Emeth WRJ

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MK Alon Tal addresses Federation donors

Rachel Wall, special to the WJN

On a clear 70-degree Sunday at the end of September, the Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor welcomed its major and legacy donors for an afternoon of togetherness and pride in the local Jewish community at the major gifts event featuring Israeli Knesset member Alon Tal. The first "hybrid" in-person/virtual event that Federation has held, nearly 100 guests gathered at the Polo Fields Golf & Country Club, with another 40 logging in to Zoom to participate. In-person attendees enjoyed "high tea-inspired" finger sandwich appetizers, while virtual participants received goody bags delivered to their homes. At the Polo Fields, those in attendance caught up with old friends and met new ones in the open air of a patio overlooking lush rolling hills. The refrain of "how nice" it was to see everyone "in real life" was heard over and over. The event was chaired by Robin and Brad Axelrod and Ed and Mona Goldman.

Event Chairs Brad Axelrod, Robin Axelrod, Ed Goldman, Mona Goldman

The major gifts event is an annual celebration that has traditionally been open to community members who donate $5,000 or more to Federation's Annual Community Campaign, as well as to those under the age of 40 who give $1,000 or more. This year, that group was expanded to include members of our community who have committed to an after-lifetime gift to Federation through the LIFE & LEGACY® program. Together, Federation's generous major donors raised over $980,000 for the 2021 Annual Community Campaign, and are poised to make an equally impressive impact for the 2022 Campaign, which launched September of this year and will extend through May 2022.

At its core, The Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor's Annual Community Campaign is how we, as a community, take care of one another. In partnership with Federation's beneficiary organizations, the Campaign builds and sustains our local and worldwide Jewish community. The money raised from the Annual Community Campaign goes straight to our most needed community organizations, including the JCC, Jewish Family Services, and Hillels at UM and EMU. It also supports older adults living in poverty in the Former Soviet Union and a youth movement for children with disabilities in Israel, among other overseas organizations. The Campaign allows these beneficiary organizations to focus on their missions of serving the community without having to worry about raising the funds needed to cover the costs of personnel and program supplies. Federation is proud of the work of these partners and is deeply grateful to all the donors who make their work possible. For more information on money raised and allocated to the community, visit JewishAnnArbor.org to view Federation's 2021 Annual Impact Report.

With community impact on their minds, attendees at the major gifts event finished up the cocktail hour by pulling their masks back over their faces and moving from the outdoor patio to a spacious indoor ballroom. There, they were treated to an exceptional program featuring member of the Knesset (MK) Tal.

A leading climate activist in Israel, Tal was born and raised in Raleigh, North Carolina. He was active in the Zionist youth movement Young Judea, which eventually led him to make aliyah to Israel as a young adult. Tal has had an illustrious academic career, earning a law degree from Hebrew University and a Master's and Doctorate in Environmental Health Policy from Harvard's School of Public Health. He has served as chair of the Department of Public Policy at Tel Aviv University since 2017 and has also held several visiting professorships around the world, including at Michigan State University. Moving his activism to the political sphere, Tal was among the founders of Israel's Green Movement party and became its chair in 2010. He then joined the Blue & White Party led by Israel's current Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Benny Gantz. When Israel formed a new government in the summer of 2021, Tal became a member of Knesset.

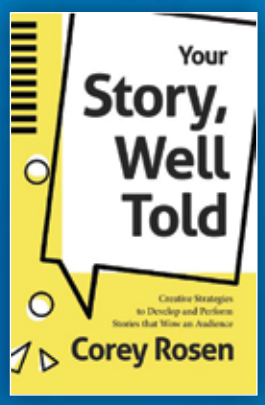
Although it was nearly midnight in Israel by the time he began to address the crowd over Zoom, MK Tal opened the program on a note of hope: "In 5782, we have seen the wonderful blessings of democracy," he said, "and how a peaceful transition of power can take place." He went on to describe his excitement and hope for the future of Israeli society, his legislative priorities around the environment and religious pluralism in Israel, and the need to address what he called a "domestic crisis" with regard to the increase in domestic violence against women during the pandemic. As he spoke, Tal invoked the idea of the shmita year, a year of rest built in to Jewish tradition. Originally intended as a year to let one's fields lay fallow in order for the land to rest, Tal reimagined 5782 as a shmita from focusing on issues that divide our communities, and instead turning our attention to areas where we can find common ground.

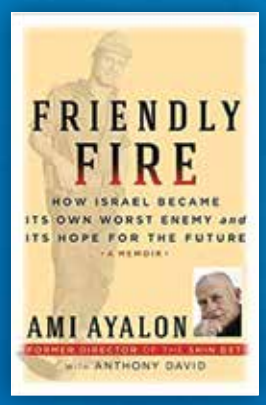
"[This program] was what we needed to take our minds off trouble in America," one attendee noted afterward. Another called it a "joyous reunion!" Indeed, it was a wonderful way to feel a sense of community and to celebrate the generosity of those who support the most vulnerable in our community and enrich Jewish life in greater Ann Arbor, in Israel, and around the world.

For more information about the Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor, or to make a gift to the 2022 Annual Community Campaign, visit JewishAnnArbor.org or contact Federation's Communications & Development Manager Rachel Wall at rachel@jewishannarbor.org or (734) 773-3533. ■

2021 ANN ARBOR Jewish BOOK FESTIVAL

Presented by the Jewish Community Center of Greater Ann Arbor





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Visit the Book Festival Homepage at book.jccannarbor.org for more information and to purchase books. For assistance or further information please contact our Welcome Desk at (734)971-0990.

OPENING NIGHT

SUN • 11/21 • 7PM EST
Corey Rosen • *Your Story, Well Told: Creative Strategies to Develop and Perform Stories that Wow an Audience* • NONFICTION

MON • 11/22 • 1PM EST
Ami Ayalon • *Friendly Fire: How Israel Became Its Own Worst Enemy and the Hope for Its Future* • NONFICTION • *National Jewish Book Awards Finalist 2020* • PROGRAM MODERATOR NEAL ELYAKIN

MON • 11/29 • 1PM EST
Heather Cabot • *The New Chardonnay: The Unlikely Story of How Marijuana Went Mainstream* • NONFICTION • PROGRAM MODERATOR MARK PASSERINI

TUE • 11/30 • 1PM EST
Naomi Ragen • *An Observant Wife: A Novel* • NOVEL

LOCAL AUTHOR
TUE • 11/30 • 7PM EST
Jeffrey Veidlinger • *In the Midst of Civilized Europe: The Pogroms of 1918–1921 and the Onset of the Holocaust* • NONFICTION • PROGRAM MODERATOR ZVI GITELMAN

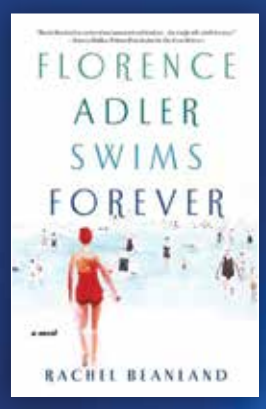
WED • 12/2 • 1PM EST
Pam Jenoff • *The Woman with the Blue Star* • NOVEL

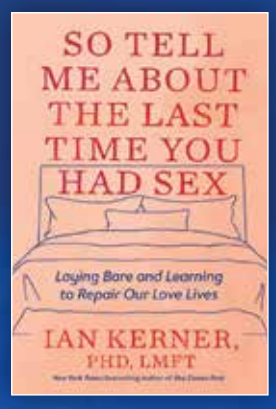
Gourmet Brunch Sponsor Event
SUN • 12/5 • 1PM • Zoom program with Avery Robinson • *Learn how to make gravlax and bagels accompanied by a glass of gazoz.*

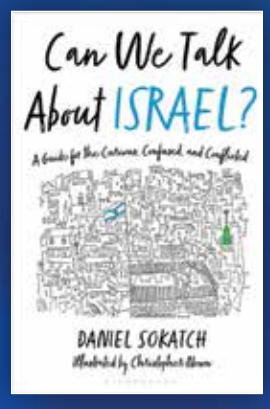
LOCAL AUTHOR
MON • 12/6 • 7PM EST
Ruth Behar • *Letters from Cuba* • FICTION • PROGRAM MODERATOR JENNIE LIEBERMAN

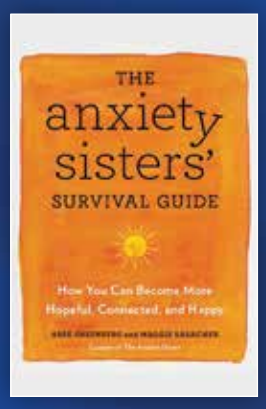
TUE • 12/7 • 1PM EST
Einat Nathan • *My Everything: The Parent I Want to Be, The Children I Hope to Raise* • NONFICTION • PROGRAM MODERATOR RUTH MOSCOW COHEN

TUE • 12/7 • 7PM EST
Lisa Goldberg, Merelyn Frank Chalmers, Natanya Eskin and Jacqui Israel • *Now for Something Sweet - Monday Morning Cooking Club* • COOKBOOK









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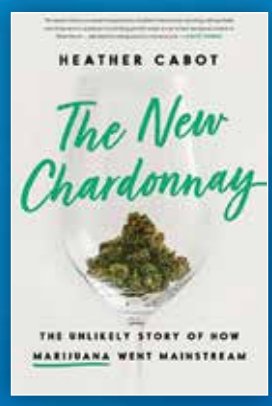

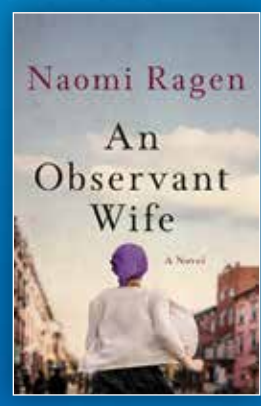

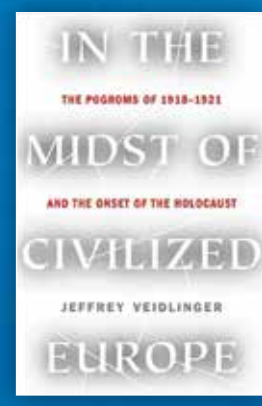

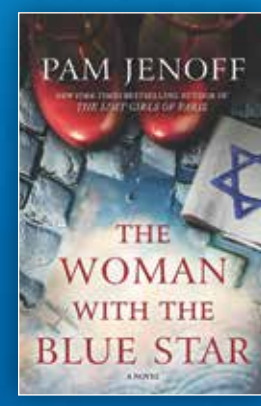

WED • 12/8 • 7PM EST
Rachel Beanland • *Florence Adler Swims Forever* • FICTION • *National Jewish Book Awards Winner 2020*

THU • 12/9 • 7PM EST
Ian Kerner • *So Tell Me About the Last Time You Had Sex: Laying Bare and Learning to Repair Our Love Lives* • NONFICTION

SUN • 12/12 • 1PM EST
Daniel Sokatch • *Can We Talk About Israel?: A Guide for the Curious, Confused, and Conflicted* • NONFICTION • PROGRAM MODERATOR JONATHAN TROBE

MON • 12/13 • 1PM EST
James McAuley • *The House of Fragile Things: Jewish Art Collectors and the Fall of France* • NONFICTION

MON • 12/13 • 7PM EST
Abbe Greenberg and Maggie Sarachek • *The Anxiety Sisters' Survival Guide: How You Can Become More Hopeful, Connected, and Happy* • NONFICTION

TUE • 12/14 • 1PM EST
Jonathan Dunsky • *The Auschwitz Detective* • FICTION • PROGRAM MODERATOR MARTIN SHICHTMAN

TUE • 12/14 • 7PM EST
Heather Dune Macadam • *999: The Extraordinary Young Women of the First Official Jewish Transport to Auschwitz* • NONFICTION

WED • 12/15 • 1PM EST
Tracy Walder • *The Unexpected Spy: From the CIA to the FBI, My Secret Life Taking Down Some of the World's Most Notorious Terrorists* • NONFICTION

WED • 12/15 • 7PM EST
Robert Lefkowitz • *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to Stockholm: The Adrenaline-Fueled Adventures of an Accidental Scientist* • NONFICTION • PROGRAM MODERATOR CHARLES NEWMAN

THU • 12/16 • 1PM EST
Louie Kemp • *Dylan & Me: 50 Years of Adventures* • NONFICTION • PROGRAM MODERATOR SANDOR SLOMOVITS

THU • 12/16 • 7PM EST
Ira Rosen • *Ticking Clock: Behind the Scenes at 60 Minutes* • NONFICTION

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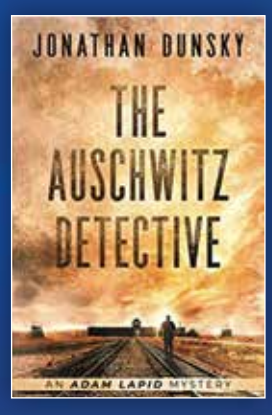

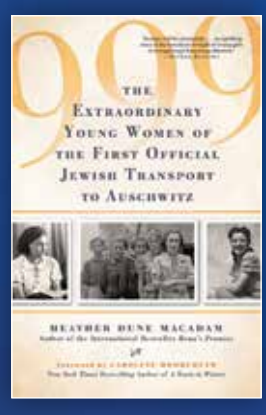

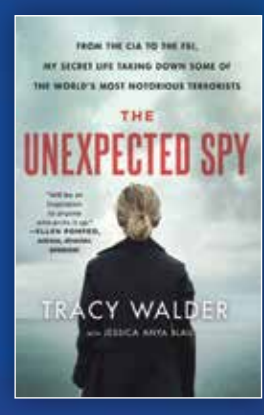

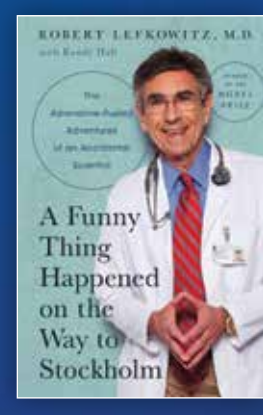

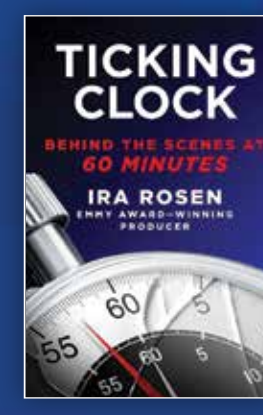

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A conversation with Ann Arbor's new shinshinit, Ron Harel

By Liora Rosen

Please join the Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor as we welcome our community's new shinshinit, Ron Harel!

You may be thinking, "Sure, I'd be happy to welcome her, but what in the world *is* a shinshinit?"

Shinshinim (plural; sing. masc.: shinshin, sing. fem.: shinshinit) are Israeli teens who, upon graduating from high school, choose to defer their army service for a year or more in order to volunteer in communities in Israel and around the world. Shinshin is the Hebrew acronym for shenat sherut, or year of service.

Shinshinim are carefully chosen from thousands of applicants after a lengthy and thorough process which evaluates candidates' personality traits, creativity, interpersonal skills, knowledge of Israeli culture, fluency in English, and much more. After the rigorous process, these young Israeli ambassadors/emissaries engage in a 9-month training program before being sent to Jewish communities around the world to share their youthful and enthusiastic Israeli spirits and serve as outstanding representatives of Israel.

Shinshinim bring their energy, love of Israel, and unique perspectives to worldwide synagogues, religious schools, pre-schools, and Jewish Community Centers. In addition to Jewish organizations, they often serve as informal educators in public schools and other venues in the community. Shinshinim provide an authentic Israeli perspective, sharing on a range of topics including Israeli culture, Jewish identity, Jewish celebrations, and life in Israel in general, through creative programs and challenging discussions. One of their main objectives is to promote lasting engagement between their host community and Israel by forging personal relationships with community members that ultimately build a bridge for strong, meaningful ties for the future.

The shinshinim program in greater Ann Arbor is a partnership between the Jewish Agency for Israel, the Jewish Federation of Metro Detroit, the Israel & Overseas Program of the Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor, and the Partnership2Gether program between Michigan and Israel's Central Galilee/Jezreel Valley region, which includes Ann Arbor's partner community in Moshav Nahahal.

This year's Detroit shinshinim are: Amit Bellin, Ron Harel, Noa Levi and Itai Schwartz. They arrived in late August and are already involved in various activities throughout Southeast Michigan.

I had the opportunity to sit down with Ron (rhymes with "drone") Harel, who will be spending time every week in both Metro Detroit and Ann Arbor. Please enjoy learning more about Ron in her own words.

Liora Rosen: Tell us a little bit about the shinshinim program and how you ended up here.

Ron Harel: I was born in Israel in 2003, and ever since have lived in the pastoral area of Jezreel Valley, first in Timrat, and in Zippori village for the last 15 years with my family: my parents, my two younger sisters, and my amazing dog and 5 cats! I spent my last 6 years of school going to Nahalal high school where I majored in chemistry and theater. In my time at school, I've heard a lot about the great partnership connection between Ann Arbor and Nahalal from my Nahalal friends and teachers, and also from meeting some of the Ann Arbor teens during their exchange trips to Nahalal. It has always been a great experience for me, so coming here to the community with the ability to contribute right after finishing high school feels so special for me. The shinshinim program of the Jewish agency brings young high school graduates with a deep love for Israel and Judaism, to volunteer in Jewish communities around the world while being given the chance to bring our personal Israeli Jewish identity. This year, out of thousands of applicants and months of challenging evaluation, intensive training, and preparation, only 140 shinshinim were chosen to represent Israel in communities spread all over the globe with the same purpose: to share their Israeli Jewish identities. In late August, I said goodbye to my family and friends for a year and came to Michigan with three other shinshinim my age. Although my main work is in Detroit, I also have the amazing opportunity to meet and work with the Jewish community of Ann Arbor because of our Nahalal connection. Mondays through Thursdays, my shinshinit work is in metro Detroit at Hillel Day School, Farber Jewish Academy high school, and West Bloomfield's Temple Israel, but on Fridays I get to drive to Ann Arbor and engage in great work, like being at the Hebrew Day School. In addition to HDS, I'm definitely looking forward to connecting with and being involved with a range of organizations, through their programs and activities, as well as meeting many members of the community here.

LR: How did you decide to do this gap year of service?

RH: Being Israeli has always been an integral part of my Jewish identity, and I've always known that I would love to spread the magical things

continued on page 21

about the place and country I grew up in, the idea of Israel from all its unique sides, people and places, to people around the world and Jews in particular. The journey that brought me to do this started almost 4 years ago, when I was 15 years old, and joined the MEET organization.

LR: Tell us about it!
RH: MEET is a nonprofit organization bringing together young Israelis and Palestinians to learn high level studies of leadership, entrepreneurship, computer science, and technology in a 3-year curriculum to more deeply understand one another's society and the conflict, with the vision to create a society where the Middle East youth entrepreneurs and leaders of tomorrow will work cooperatively to create a better future in the Middle East and the region through social entrepreneurship and leadership. The rigorous curriculum is designed by professors at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and is supported by many other partners such as Facebook, Google, Microsoft and more. During my time as a student in MEET, I initiated and managed a startup called BARK — an adoption platform for dogs in danger. After graduating from the program at the end of 11th grade, I immediately started working as an entrepreneurship counselor and accompanied startup groups. My time in MEET has completely changed my life and made me look at so many perspectives. Meeting a variety of people from different religious backgrounds strengthened my Israeli Jewish identity and made me dig deeper into my sources, roots, and history. I began to understand that my history and identity contain so many stories I want to tell. I discovered there are many people from different backgrounds that are willing to process and listen. The deep conversations I had there, the variety of people, backgrounds, and points of view, made me look at a much wider and bigger picture of my life as an Israeli Jew, and it is what made me start the evaluation process for the Jewish Agency for Israel's young emissary gap year program.

LR: What are some other personal interests you have?
RH: Other than MEET, I'm very interested in the arts, including acting, writing and photography, in learning new languages, and in motocross! Before coming to Michigan, I was a journalist at "Frogi", the biggest youth newspaper in Israel, and wrote for the cinema and fashion sections. I also wrote for "Newrivista" fashion magazine, and I attended many fashion productions and premiers, and I conducted many interviews with actors, designers, fashion bloggers, and people that just inspired me. I hoped I could inspire more youth through my writing. Other than that, theatre and film acting are my biggest passions! I majored in theatre at Nahalal high school, which has a great theatre department. This year I acted in two short movies, one of them in the lead role. The other film was for Nonny Geffen, an amazing Israeli film director. Acting, theatre, and filmmaking are driving me! I love telling big stories and bringing them to society in these forms. This is something I want to do forever. I also came here to Michigan to tell my story, in as many ways I can, sometimes even in different languages.

LR: Do you speak more languages than Hebrew and English?
RH: Other than Hebrew and English, I'm also fluent in Spanish. When I visited Spain two years ago, I fell in love with the language and the people and ever since I learned the language on my own from scratch, and I keep doing it every single day, from books, films, my visits there, and people I met along the way. Today I can write and act in Spanish and be exposed to another culture which is so magical. FUN FACT: I did most of the vetting for this gap year both in English and Spanish!

LR: What about sports?
RH: When coming to Michigan, I already felt comfortable, as I am a total sports fan! Go Blue! I played basketball for 7 years until I was 15, but my biggest love is motocross. I am a motocross rider. I got my first dirt bike when I was 13 and ever since I can say that "the rest is history." I used to race and compete in the Israeli championship, got the opportunity to ride abroad and fell in love with this amazing sport even more when my dad and sister joined me three years ago, when she was seven. I feel that in this sport you need to be very focused but also mature and independent, and there is no other feeling that can compare to jumping with the motorcycle right in the open air!

This year's Shinshinim for Southeast Michigan: Noa Levi, Itai Schwartz, Ron Harel, and Amit Bellin.

LR: How are you enjoying Michigan so far?
RH: It's so fun! I have been to the States twice before, but never to Michigan, so the first few weeks here I loved feeling like a tourist and exploring so many things and places.

LR: What's the best experience you've had so far?
RH: Seeing the Michigan Wolverines play was by far my craziest experience here and I loved it! I also love taking walks on the UM campus, and every week I'm here I discover another magical place on the campus or downtown in Ann Arbor. I'm just blown away by the city and more than that by the people in the community and of course by the amazing students of HDS.

LR: What else are you looking forward to doing in the states?
RH: I really want to travel, maybe to the east coast, and to visit NYC and Colorado. I want to explore Michigan, to go up north to see the lakes and the impeccable nature, to go to shows, concerts, museums, and motocross races! I know the basketball season is about to start and I'm especially looking forward to that. I want to make the best of every day this year!

LR: From your experience so far, tell us about expressing your Jewish identity here?
RH: After spending the holidays here through September, I was exposed to so many different Jewish identities and approaches, and I feel like my Israeli Jewish identity can develop here. Attending services and meeting people from all streams of Judaism really strengthened my Jewish identity. I also feel that my Israeli Identity contributes a lot. In Israel, being Jewish is the obvious form of living. You are surrounded by it everywhere. Here, people need to define their Jewish identity every day. I find it very powerful and have much appreciation for that. I'm also really excited for more Jewish holidays here; it's just so different and special in so many ways! In Israel, my favorite holiday is Purim, and I'm already starting to think about my costume for this year!

LR: What happens after this gap year?
RH: After this year of service, which will include working at Camp Tamarack over the summer, the other shinshinim and I are going back to Israel and starting our army service in the Israel Defense Forces.

LR: Finally, what impact do you want to leave on our community?
RH: I want to bring the real magical and fascinating, yet often complex sides of our lovely Israel, through a variety of its layers, from a young, modern, and liberal point of view. In addition to being an ambassador of Israeli everything to the American community, I also want to embrace and learn and be inspired by the uniqueness of this community. In my time here, I hope to contribute to the growth and preservation of the beautiful friendship between Ann Arbor and Nahalal which is also my second home.

Ron will be in the Greater Ann Arbor community every Friday. In addition to spending time at the Hebrew Day School, Ron is looking forward to connecting with as many people as possible, whether it is engaging with students in religious schools, teens through youth programs, community members through Shabbat dinners, or the multitude of other organizations and opportunities available throughout Ann Arbor. To meet, connect with, or host Ron on Shabbat, please reach out to Liora Rosen, Israel & Overseas Program Manager at the Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor, at Liora@jewishannarbor.org ■

Looking for Rose: community and faith

Clare Kinberg, 23rd installment in a series

After forty years of looking for my estranged Aunt Rose, I found that she had lived for several decades in a rural, African American community on the shore of Paradise Lake in southwest Michigan. I found her grave in the Calvin Community Chapel Cemetery where she had been buried in 1982.

My Aunt Rose's brief obituary in the *Cassopolis Vigilant* revealed Rose was a "former member of the Peoples Protestant Church in Cassopolis," Michigan. On the surface, this statement answered the question, had Aunt Rose become a Christian after moving to Cass County?

My first reaction to reading Aunt Rose's obituary was denial, latching on to the word "former" in the description of her church membership. She is buried in a church cemetery, but is that evidence of her faith? When my mother spent over a decade in a nursing home where she was the only Jew, she attended all the Christian religious services; she enjoyed the singing and the company, but never was anything other than a Jewish woman. When I think of Aunt Rose I know I'm holding onto my doubts because conversion to Christianity brings up complicated emotions.

I've been a Jewish teacher, writer, editor, and organizer for over 40 years. I love the work I do, passing on a thousands-year-old spiritual/cultural heritage, adding my two cents at the same time. For most of this time, God hasn't played a conscious role in any of my Jewish writing or teaching beyond trying to understand the way Jews conceptualized God differently over the centuries, a secular and academic approach.

In the early 1980s, I was enchanted with the writings of Mordechai Kaplan, the founder of Reconstructionist Judaism, who eschewed a transcendent or supernatural deity in favor of understanding God as a unifying quality or force through which humans can be part of a process of integration, harmony, and self-fulfillment. Kaplan's teaching that Judaism is an evolving religious civilization opens the door to recognizing and encouraging evolving understandings of God. My own faith in a unity and interconnectedness of all of creation, and my belief that I am a particular emanation of God, brings me joy and provides purpose, helping me live a worthy life.

When I lead children's services for the Jewish High Holidays, I put up a chuppa and ask the kids to imagine that the Jewish wedding canopy has become the open-sided tent of our ancestors Sarah and Abraham. This symbol of the open tent is powerful in Judaism, standing in for many deeply embedded ideas. The "open tent" is a metaphor for Judaism's face to the world. We don't leave the tent to proselytize. Jews and non-Jews passing by the tent may "ta sh'ma": come and listen/come and learn. Taking permanent shelter under the tent is a commitment which is available and there are refreshments in the tent — hospitality is a mitzvah. But we don't chase after the passersby.

I don't really know if Christianity is fundamentally different in this regard, but it seems that way to me. Like most Jews I know, I've been proselytized by Christians and I have resented having to put up a resistance, even (especially) when the proselytizer has good intentions. As a pre-teen I remember attending a fun song fest that ended with the leaders handing out "One Way" posterboard hands with a finger pointing to the sky. The meaning of the "one way" symbol, that salvation is only through accepting Jesus as the son of God, slowly dawned on us Jewish kids. I felt tricked, frightened, and then angry. And I already knew better: it is obvious to Jews who live as a minority among Christians, Muslims and others that there are many paths to God, to a righteous life, to purpose, joy, and redemption.

I'm comfortable with my faith, and I think of myself as open to others whose faith is different from mine. Many Jews I know incorporate Buddhist and other meditation practices not originated in Judaism into their Jewish practice. And I know that historically Jewish practice has been permeable. Many years ago, my beloved sister-in-law Alice Haya Kinberg z"l, who grew up in Morocco before escaping to Israel in the 1960s, expanded my mind with stories about Jewish Sufis in Morocco. Most Sufis in Morocco were Muslim, but their practice of ecstatic spinning connecting them to God was also practiced by some Jews, another example of cultural practices with spiritual meaning being shared by people of different religions.

But when my openness comes into contact with Christianity, I often feel myself erecting a protective brick wall.

Here's a fact of my life that may be familiar to other Jews, and I expect will surprise many Christians. Just the sight of a cross triggers a "fight or flight" response in me, rushing hormones from my brain to every part of my body. My body seems to tap into the imprint of centuries of forced conversions under threat of death or expulsion. One of my daughters seems to feel this every time she sees a county sheriff's car.

My other daughter wears a delicate golden cross necklace. For her, I think, the cross is a symbol of Jesus' protective love and her submission to the word of God. I don't want to "fight or flee" when I see my daughter. I want to open my heart further, meaning I have to explore my instinctive reactions, my experiences with Christianity, and elements of my own faith. I need to look at how I feel about a Jew who grew up in a Jewish family — like my daughter and my Aunt Rose — praying to God in Jesus' name. For my daughter, I know her relationships with Christian African Americans was a doorway into her spiritual journey to God.

Though I had hoped to help my daughter find community with other Jews of color through attending the yearly retreat of the Jewish Multiracial Network, as she has said, "traveling 2000 miles to spend time with other Jews of color wasn't fulfilling" in terms of community. The "open tent" of Judaism, which expresses an intention that Jews of all persuasions are welcome in the kahal/the community, without regard to politics or adherence to halacha (Jewish religious law), never quite felt like a home for her. She became bat mitzvah, joined a Jewish choir, was a teaching assistant at synagogue school, and went to Israel with other ninth graders, yet never had a spiritually fulfilling experience.

My daughters love being with other African Americans: the experience of being Black in America, behind the veil as W.E.B. DuBois wrote, is rich, powerful and sustaining and beyond the purview of white people. My daughter discovered that for many of her Black friends, the sustaining power comes directly from God and is experienced through Jesus. Her Jewish experiences offered neither community nor the connection with God she now has.

Over the course of my writing this book about my Aunt Rose and trying to understand what becoming Christian might have meant to Rose, my daughter has become reborn and saved. She is ecstatic that she can talk to God directly, that she has found a safe harbor, that God is revealing her life's purpose, and that she has found a spiritual community in which to grow in her faith. Although we talk often about how God has entered her life, I am just beginning to understand and try to put into words her experience of God transforming her life.

When my daughters were young, many Jews asked me if I intended to raise them Jewish. At the time, I relegated this question to the category of inconsiderate and intrusive questions foisted on families with adopted children. On top of that, unbridled curiosity seems to dominate all other considerations when white people see interracial families. Jewish questioners, ignorant of their racial assumptions, were confused or perhaps just curious about how I would raise Black children as Jews. I often answered the question with a slightly huffy, "How else can a Jew raise their children?" But then added, "When they are adults, of course they will choose their own spiritual paths." Still, the question interjected doubt and acted as a wedge, undermining my confidence in my parenting and ability to transfer the gift of Jewishness to my daughters.

When my Aunt Rose moved with her African American husband to Cass County, her Jewish family cut her out of their lives, and at the same time she lived among people whose faith in God infused all aspects of their lives. I don't know if Aunt Rose was more like my mother, finding community, but not belief, in Christian prayer and song, or more like my daughter, finding prayer through Jesus spoke to her heart.

When I began my search for Aunt Rose, I wrote about the Exodusters of the 1870–80s, and in an early chapter of this book, I quoted from Vincent Wimbush's introduction to the anthology *African Americans and the Bible*, "It [the Bible] quickly came to function as a language-world, the storehouse of rhetorics, images, and stories that, through a complex history of engagement, helped establish African Americans as a circle of the biblical imaginary. It helped them imagine themselves as something other, in another world, different from what their immediate situation reflected or demanded."

I wrote then, "Wimbush's words shifted my world, allowing me — an Ashkenazi Jewish woman living in the United States and coded as white — to de-center my relationship to the Exodus story. My Jewish practice taught me to ground my sense of self by ritually imagining myself into the Exodus story. Enslaved Africans, I am learning to understand, used the story to imagine themselves into — to create — freedom that they did not experience in their lifetimes."

It is almost five years since I wrote those words, and I understand the relationship to scripture differently now. Instead of saying enslaved Africans "used the story to imagine themselves ..." I understand the God of Exodus speaks directly to believers.

Through conversations with my daughter, I am beginning to discern a unique religious template underlying African American Christian spirituality in which she experiences the God of the Torah speaking directly to her. When God speaks to Abraham and Moses, God is speaking directly to my daughter. She becomes Abraham, she becomes Moses.

When my daughter and I speak with open hearts, I hear her learning to read scripture in personally impactful ways, and when I study scripture with her (Tanach only), I learn more about my own faith. Jewish religious and spiritual practice has boundaries, but through learning about her way of relating to God, my teaching of Jewish prayer and relationship to God has gathered koach/strength. My daughter and I are still learning from each other.

I wish that I could have talked to Aunt Rose about all this. ■

Scientist David Julius, whose grandparents fled antisemitism in Czarist Russia, wins Nobel Prize in medicine

Shira Hanau, originally for the JTA

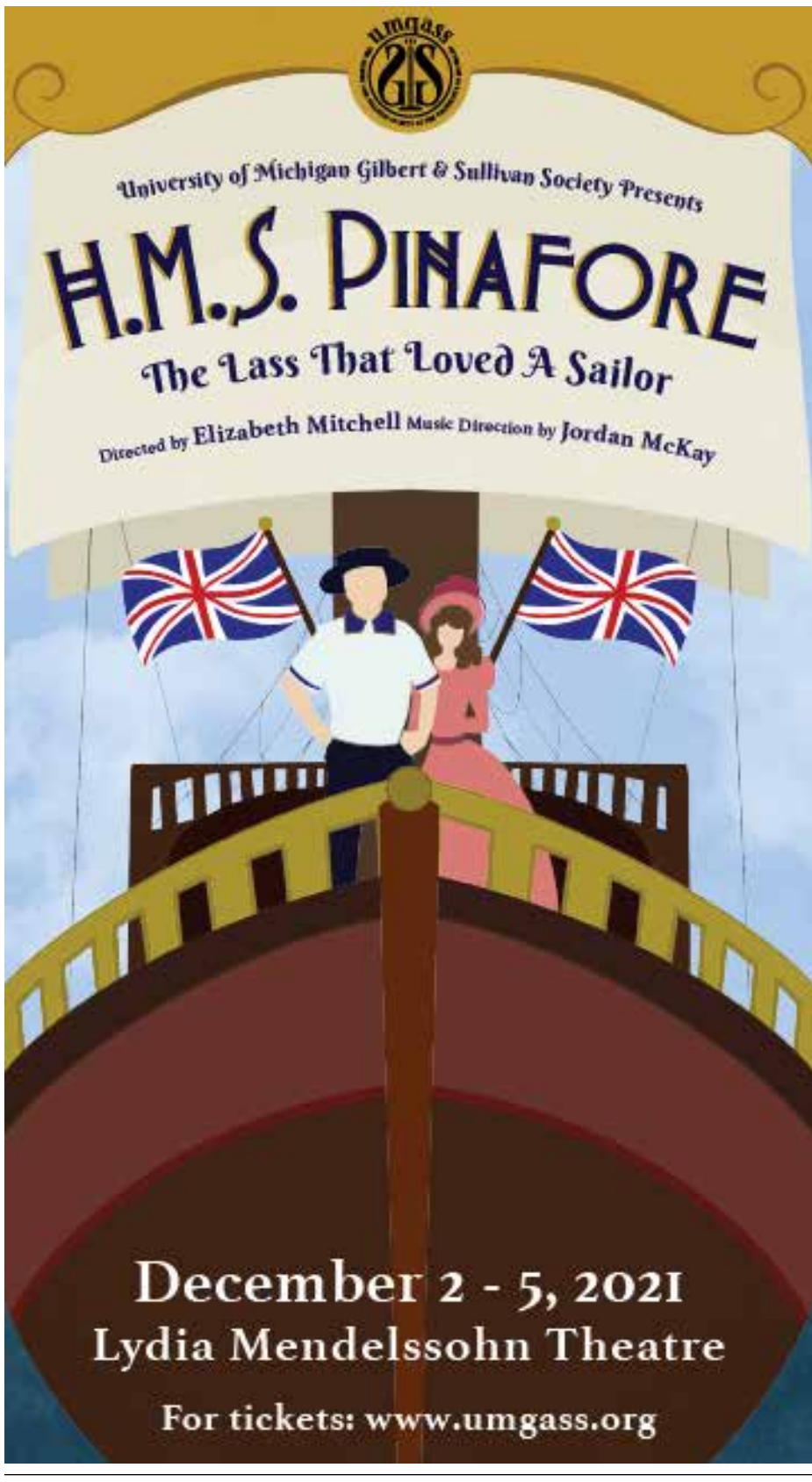
David Julius, a professor of physiology at the University of California, San Francisco, whose grandparents fled antisemitism in Czarist Russia, was awarded this year's Nobel Prize in physiology or medicine. He shared the award with Ardem Patapoutian, a molecular biologist and neuroscientist at the Scripps Research center.

The Nobel Prize committee cited Julius and Patapoutian's research "for their discoveries of receptors for temperature and touch," which have improved treatments for pain caused by a range of diseases.

Julius was born in 1955 and grew up in Brighton Beach, which was then home to a large population of Russian Jewish emigres. Julius described the neighborhood as "a landing pad for Eastern European immigrants like my grandparents, who fled Czarist Russia and antisemitism in pursuit of a better life."

A graduate of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the University of California, Berkeley, Julius has spent his career researching the way human senses like touch, pain, and heat function and has used capsaicin, the chemical in chili peppers that makes them burn, to explore how human nerve endings feel heat.

"These breakthrough discoveries launched intense research activities leading to a rapid increase in our understanding of how our nervous system senses heat, cold, and mechanical stimuli," the Nobel Prize committee wrote in its announcement of the winners.



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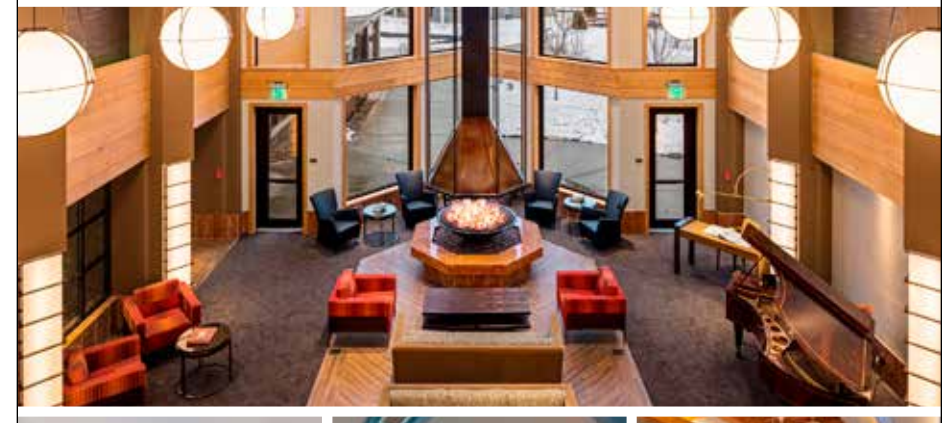

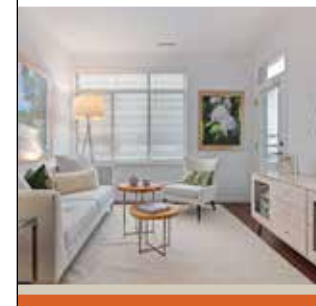

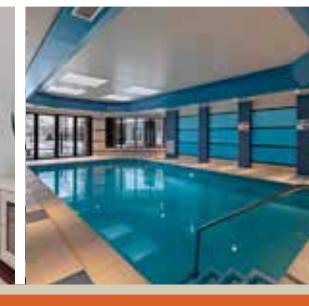

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Andy Levin says his friendship with Rashida Tlaib gives him hope for Israel

Ron Kampeas, originally for the JTA

When Andy 2Levin was elected to Congress in 2018, he was known, at least in Washington, mostly for his lineage: His father and uncle were giants among congressional Democrats.

Levin's father, Rep. Sander Levin, whose seat Levin inherited, and his uncle, the late Sen. Carl Levin, were establishment Democrats who reliably supported the U.S.-Israel relationship but, unlike some other Jewish lawmakers, did not make it a front-and-center issue of their careers.

Andy Levin, who represents a Detroit-area district, has set himself apart on both fronts.

A former union organizer, he has distinguished himself as a leader among progressives as a member of the committee on education and labor, where he has been outspoken on environmental sustainability, workers' rights and reducing college costs. He is a deputy whip of the Congressional Progressive Caucus.

And in September, Levin, 61, introduced legislation about Israel that included provisions criticized by some Israel advocates. Levin's proposed legislation would enshrine as law the U.S. commitment to a two-state outcome to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, but would also introduce strictures on how Israel spends U.S. defense assistance, banning U.S. funds from entrenching Israel's presence in the West Bank.

Levin told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency before he introduced the bill about why he believes U.S. support for Israel, including U.S. Jewish support needs recalibrating. He also talked about how his Jewish faith informs his politics; his friendship with the most outspoken anti-Zionist in Congress, Michigan Rep. Rashida Tlaib; and why he's in it for the long haul. Here's what he told us.

On Mordecai Kaplan's influence on his legislation

"You probably never heard of Reconstructionist Judaism," Levin said, explaining how he was proud to be one of just two current members of Congress who have been presidents of synagogues. The other is Jacky Rosen, the Democratic senator from Nevada, and Levin said they bonded over dinner when they realized they had that in common.

Levin seems to delight in the denomination's small size and said his congregation, T'chiyah in suburban Detroit, is "tiny" but "it's growing."

Once Levin realizes that, yes, JTA is acquainted with Reconstructionism, he geeks out on the movement's founder, Rabbi Mordecai Kaplan. "His daughter was the first girl ever bar mitzvahed!" Then he goes onto Kaplan's sociological and theological teachings.

Kaplan "really came up with the idea that Judaism is a civilization, and this is actually super relevant to this question" of Levin's support for Israel as expressed through his bill, he said. "I don't see Judaism as a religion. I see us as a people, you know culture, cuisine, Yiddishkeit I mean, so much. And this is part of why I feel like we deserve a homeland — not to mention the oppression of centuries, millennia."

On his friendship with Rashida Tlaib

Levin's district neighbor is represented by Rashida Tlaib, the Palestinian-American congresswoman who opposes Israel's existence as a Jewish state. Her actions and comments have led some of her caucus colleagues to call her antisemitic; during the vote on supplemental funds for Iron Dome, Rep. Ted Deutch, the Jewish Democrat from Florida, outright said her use of the word "apartheid" to describe Israel was antisemitic.

Levin and Tlaib, Detroiters say, act as a team in advocating for federal relief for the city, and he says they have been friends for ages, having gotten to know one another when she was a Michigan state legislator and he was the director of Michigan's labor and energy department. "She and I worked on economic justice in Detroit long before she or I would ever dream of running for Congress," he said.

So does Levin talk about Jewish peoplehood and the need for a Jewish homeland with Tlaib?

Absolutely, he said, and while he rejects her rejection of a Jewish homeland, he does not see it as antisemitic.

"People misunderstand Rashida," he said. "I mean, she is the one person that I know of in the House or the Senate, who is openly for a one-state solution, and people say that is antisemitic."

Levin said calling one-state advocates antisemitic was problematic; for one thing, he said, there were a growing number of young Jews who favored the outcome, in part because of their friendships with Arab Americans.

"There's a distinction between what I would call the romantic notion, what I would say is maybe an unrealistic or even naive notion, or even a utopian notion of one state which Jews and Palestinians, all share … and the push-us-into-the-sea crowd which exists and is real."

Levin, who in 2019 helped organize private, emotionally frank talks between Jewish and Muslim Democrats, said his relationship with Tlaib could serve as a model for Jewish-Palestinian dialogue.

"If this Jewish boy and Palestinian girl from Detroit disagree with each other and talk about our views about the future for Israel and Palestine — you know, let's go," he said. "I mean this is what the Jewish and Palestinian peoples need to do on a broader scale."

On why he's planning for the long term

Levin, refreshingly, acknowledges that his bill on two-states and strictures on funding for Israel won't likely see the light of day this Congress. (No lawmaker ever admits that a bill is doomed.) But he says that's not the point.

As an organizer at heart, he said he sees what he hopes is a parallel in the Voting Rights Act and Civil Rights Act that Congress passed in 1964 and 1965.

"So let's say now it's 1962 or even 1958, and you were having an interview and I'm whoever introduced those bills in those years. And you said 'well, this is naive, this is not passing' — but you have to organize for change," he said. "We are duty-bound to try to get there. And we need to start today."

Levin may have time. His dad served in his district for 36 years. ■

Washtenaw County Commission implored to fund grassroots groups

Floki Ivey, special to the WJN

In the wake of burying a 17-year-old Ypsilanti boy due to gun violence, Trisché Duckworth addressed the Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners at a Zoom meeting on the evening of October 6. Duckworth demanded that second round stimulus funds from the federal American Rescue Plan go to grassroots organizations in Ypsilanti and Ypsilanti Township.

Ypsilanti and Ypsilanti Township will receive $2 million and $5.45 million, respectively, of the Rescue Plan funds, but will the funds be used in the best interest of those most affected by the crisis?

Gun violence is a systemic problem in Ypsilanti. The township has some of the highest gun violence rates per capita in the country. There are existing groups from the area that are working to solve these problems, but they lack funding. Duckworth's intent in putting forward this proposal is to get money into the hands of "grass roots agencies that are specifically offering moments of community healing and empowerment."

Duckworth, a community activist and executive director of Survivors Speak, stated, "There are groups who are steadfastly working like: Women and Men Working for Change, Supreme Felons, Diamond Princess, Our Community Reads, Ypsi Can I Share, Shaah Foundation, Mentor to Youth, Girls Group, Educate Youth, Ypsilanti Art Programs, Staying Power, YCHS Youth Choir, Survivors Speak, We The People Opportunity Farm, Telling It, My Brother's Keeper, Grace Fellowship Church, Fresh Start Church and many, many more." She demanded that the Board of Commissioners vote to give 6 million dollars of the stimulus money directly to these grassroots groups.

There were 12 shootings in Washtenaw County in 2020. Ten of those were in Ypsilanti and Ypsilanti Township. The violent crime rate is two times that of the state average and three times the national average. This puts residents of Ypsilanti at a 1 in 105 chance of being victimized by violent crime. In the last four weeks alone there have been four gun crimes reported to the police. There are a lot of programs in the area that are addressing the systemic problems of this gun violence, but they are very underfunded.

Of the total funds allocated to Washtenaw County, $11.85 million has been allocated to the city of Ann Arbor, 37% more of the money than for Ypsilanti. Ann Arbor is an affluent area with a large tax base and significant infrastructure to address systemic problems.

When questioned about why Ann Arbor was allocated so much more money than Ypsilanti and Ypsilanti Township, Justin Hodge, the District 5 (largely Ypsilanti Township) County Commissioner, said the numbers are put forward by the federal government, not the commissioners. Townships can partner on things that are county wide, but the money is meant to be used in the township that it was allocated. They are allowed to pool the money for the good of the whole county, but ultimately each township is responsible for where the money is spent.

Hodge explained that the first round of stimulus funds were used to create child savings plans for all children in the county, but children on free and reduced lunch would be given 500 dollars to use towards college as compared to other students that will only be given 25 dollars. Income-based requirements, that will largely address the areas most in need, are also what has been used to qualify people for the childcare program and weatherization.

Duckworth responded to this information by saying, "Black people are sick of taking scraps and not being asked what we need. While these things [child savings plans] are great, they do not get to the root of the problem or consider those people most affected by the pandemic. Black folks made up 48% of the hospitalizations for COVID-19, but only make up 12% of the population."

When asked why Duckworth's proposal on funding grassroots groups was not given more discussion, Hodge stated that it needed more details than just numbers and groups. He stated that he wanted to fund them, but they are not incorporated organizations or non-profits. They are looking at options of how to fund these ideas, but there are hoops to jump through.

Duckworth replied that it was great to hear that the county wants to create systemic change, but "we are in a crisis. Asking us to jump through hoops in a time of crisis is not realistic. We need this money now to save lives. There are agencies in place already. The commissioners need to be willing to work with people, not just institutions, to get things done. There are other groups that are not jumping through hoops, but Black people are not being given the same expediency. The hoops are rooted in racism. The commissioners work from a place of privilege, and they don't always see what the Black community needs."

Duckworth's proposal would infuse a city in need with an immediate influx of money in which to address these issues. "Ypsilanti cannot wait," Duckworth pleaded. The proposals thus far approved by the country commissioners have been to deal with serious infrastructure issues, but they fail to address the need present in the community. "This community knows what it needs" stated Duckworth, "in order for them to do the right things for us, they have to listen to us." ■

Mark Oppenheimer's new book on the Tree of Life shooting is an ode to an iconic Jewish neighborhood

David Rullo, originally for the Pittsburgh Jewish Chronicle, via JTA)

Mark Oppenheimer's new book, *Squirrel Hill: The Tree of Life Synagogue Shooting and the Soul of a Neighborhood*, recounts the deadliest antisemitic attack in U.S. history through interviews with those impacted — both directly and tangentially — by the shooting, while examining the effects of the event on Squirrel Hill, the heavily Jewish neighborhood of Pittsburgh where Tree of Life is located.

The author's Pittsburgh Jewish roots go back several generations. His great-great-great grandfather co-founded the first Jewish burial society in Pittsburgh, and his father grew up on Aylesboro Avenue in the center of Squirrel Hill.

In writing his book, Oppenheimer traveled to the city 32 times, interviewed about 250 people and had contact with relatives of eight of the 11 people who were murdered that day. He also relied heavily on various news reports, including many published in the Pittsburgh Jewish Chronicle.

Oppenheimer is the host of *Tablet* magazine's podcast "Unorthodox," and is the author of five books, including *Knocking on Heaven's Door: American Religion in the Age of Counterculture* and *The Newish Jewish Encyclopedia*. He was the religion columnist for *The New York Times* from 2010 to 2016.

Oppenheimer had a virtual conversation with the *Chronicle* to discuss the book prior to its release. The interview has been edited for length and clarity.

Pittsburgh Jewish Chronicle: Why did you decide to write this book now?

Mark Oppenheimer: I was always curious about Squirrel Hill. The morning of the shooting, I was at a bat mitzvah in Newton, Massachusetts, with my eldest daughter. We had left our phones in the car until after the lunch. We got back to our car, I opened my phone, and I had a ton of messages. "Is everyone safe in Pittsburgh? Are you going to Pittsburgh? Did you know anyone in Pittsburgh?" Then I looked at my news app and saw that there had been a shooting at a synagogue in Squirrel Hill. It immediately registered as the neighborhood where my father and grandfather and great-grandfather had all lived. My father was a fifth-generation Pittsburgher and his family settled in Squirrel Hill pretty much around the time that Jews were settling there around World War I. I felt afraid for the community. I felt a connection to the community. To be clear, I grew up in Springfield, Massachusetts, but I knew, as a historian of American religion, that Squirrel Hill has a special place in the annals of American-Jewish history as an extremely old, extremely stable Jewish community, having been substantively Jewish for about 100 years. The irony that this terrible attack would happen to this community that has been so special to American Jewry felt like it called out to be explored more. I also got curious about how a community that has so many advantages in terms of stability, in terms of having multigenerational families, in terms of walkability, good urban street life, local institutions, schools, synagogues, churches, shopping districts, how it would be resilient in the face of something terrible.

PJC: What does the community represent to you, and did that change because of the shooting?

MO: My father had this wonderful idyllic childhood in a community where it was safe, where people looked out for each other, where there were Jews of all kinds, ranging from the most secular to the most Orthodox, and that people basically lived pretty happily. I also knew that Pittsburgh was a good city in which to be Jewish, that antisemitism is fairly low, that it's a city of ethnic neighborhoods and that people respect the different ethnicities. I knew it as a special place. I don't think the shooting changed what it meant for me at all. I feel bad for Pittsburghers that now some people will think of an act of violence when they think of Pittsburgh, but the city itself and its neighborhoods are as wonderful as ever. I don't think that the shooter changed that.

PJC: For whom did you write the book?

MO: I always write for the public. I always write with the hope that anyone who's curious about human beings and anyone who wants to read something interesting will find that in my work. I think the book will be interesting to Jews, but it's not at all meant only for Jews. I think it's meant for everyone who is curious about the human experience and about the way people cope with difficult times. With that said, the book isn't strictly a Jewish book, nor is it strictly a Squirrel Hill or Pittsburgh book. It seems to encapsulate everybody and everything.

PJC: Given that you don't live in the neighborhood, why did you think you were the right person to write this book?

MO: I think there are a lot of right people to write about everything. There should be multiple books about every aspect of human experience. My book is the third book that touches substantively on this shooting. I'm not a Pittsburgher, I'm a journalist. Journalists should go everywhere that their curiosities take them, and they should report what they find as truthfully and as empathetically as they can.

PJC: You named the shooter in the book. Many in the local media, including the *Chronicle*, will not do that. Why did you make that decision?

MO: As somebody writing for posterity, I have no choice. Imagine if all the books about the Tree of Life shooting didn't name the shooter. How would anyone study the shooting, how would we have an accurate record of this hateful, antisemitic, bigoted terrorist act? We need the names of historical Nazis, of historical racists, of historical antisemites, of historical terrorists. These are crucial to the public record. I did not feel that I had a choice.

PJC: One of the points you make is that there's a cottage industry built around each mass shooting, but aren't books like this part of that industry?

MO: That's a great question. It's hard to think of my book and the two others that have come out of the past three years as representing an industry. It is certainly true that journalists who cover sad events have to deal with the irony that they're making their livelihood writing about sad events. There's no way around it. Journalism about sad events and about destructive human behavior should happen. It should be a profession that's done by people who do their best to be ethical and competent. You wouldn't want it done only by volunteers or only by people who lived through it. We are often paid to investigate other people's misfortune. And that doesn't always feel great. But I do think it's important work, especially in a free society.

PJC: What are the lessons that you've learned from writing the book?

MO: Squirrel Hill reminded me of something that other reporting had led me to believe: Most people flourish more and thrive better when they live in relatively dense, walkable close-knit neighborhoods. For most people, that's a better way to live. And that if bad things happen to them, they will be grateful for the proximity of their friends and neighbors. ■

Judaism often thrives on new technologies. That doesn't mean Impossible Pork should be kosher.

David Zvi Kalman, originally for the JTA

The Orthodox Union won't certify Impossible Pork as kosher, representing a break from the way that decisions about certifying kosher food are normally made. But as someone who studies Judaism's long relationship with technology, I would argue that it is undoubtedly the right move.

Since the OU first started certifying products a century ago, kosher supervision has always remained doggedly focused on objective fact-finding: Food is kosher because of what's in it and how it's made (and, occasionally, who makes it) and that's basically it. To get this information, modern kosher supervision agencies have built out fantastically complex global operations that keep track of complicated and constantly shifting supply chains. These systems are often incurious about almost everything not directly related to the food processing itself, including whether factory working conditions are acceptable, whether the ingredients are sustainably sourced, or whether the certified product will kill you (though politics sometimes leaks in anyway).

So it was unusual when the OU — the largest certifier of kosher products in the world — denied certification to Impossible Pork, a next-gen meat substitute, despite the fact that every ingredient in the product is kosher. The OU explained that it could not certify a product that described itself as pork.

Despite protestations to the contrary from hungry Jews and my own deep culinary curiosity, I believe that the OU made the right call. Though it seems that the decision was narrowly decided, the move to withhold kosher certification may in fact turn out to be one of the most important Jewish legal decisions of the 21st century. This may seem like a hyperbolic way of talking about soy protein slurry, but I really think it isn't. The OU's move is a first, tentative step towards a stance on technological innovation that desperately needs to become more common.

To understand why, we need to understand the effect of new technologies on legal regimes. Law needs to be specific to be effective, and so well-constructed law is often carefully tailored to the nitty-gritty details of specific objects, systems and ways of behaving. When a new technology comes along and replaces the old — even if the new tech does exactly the same thing as the old — it can make the old law irrelevant unless lawmakers intervene with an update. Interventions are especially important when the old technology has been around for a long time and law has grown intertwined with it. Regulating cryptocurrency, for example, is crucial precisely because so many financial regulations assume that transactions take place exclusively through state-issued currency that is mostly stored in banks.

But if the job of lawmakers is to create continuities between old and new tech, many modern tech firms, with their "move fast and break things" culture, often seem hellbent on tearing them apart. The makers of new technology like to call things "unprecedented" because it generates hype, but disconnecting new technologies from old ones is also a good way of shielding themselves from ethical and legal responsibility for how those technologies behave.

This new tech dynamic plays out in Jewish law, too. How should the rule forbidding leather shoes on Yom Kippur — because they were considered an indulgence — apply in an era of comfortable synthetic shoes? Must one wear tzitzit (ritual fringes) at all when modern

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My militant sister campaigns against intermarriage. I am engaged to a gentile. Here's how we remain family.

Rachel Hartman, originally for the JTA

My sister and I grew up in a small settlement surrounded by Arab villages in the disputed West Bank. We have ended up, however, in very different places.

I am currently pursuing a PhD in social psychology, studying the science of moral understanding and how it can be leveraged to bridge divides. My sister is an activist and full-time employee at an Israeli organization that strictly opposes personal relationships, especially romantic ones, between Jews and non-Jews.

My research focuses on bridging divides, but I am somewhat at a loss for how to traverse the widening gulf between my sister and me. She faces a similar dilemma — she is becoming increasingly (in)famous in Israel for her rhetoric against intermarriage while her own sister is marrying someone who is not Jewish.

Conflict, of one from or another, has defined our entire lives.

Conflict, of one form or another, has defined our entire lives. Our family moved from the United States to a settlement in the West Bank when I was five. We used to stop by Palestinian watermelon stands on our way back from Jerusalem. My brother became friends with the Arab workers who built our home.

At the turn of the millennium, everything changed and this sense of peaceful coexistence was gone. Riots broke out in Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza. My father bought bullet-proof vests for us to wear when we had to travel that same road to Jerusalem. The watermelon stands were gone. In their place, children threw rocks at cars that drove by. Two teenagers from our town went for a hike and never returned. Their bodies were found in a cave, mutilated beyond recognition. We grieved, then grew angry. I was keenly aware of the Jewish side of the conflict: We were the rightful occupants of the land; they were our enemy. We were righteous; they were evil.

As a child I was unschooled. My mother was your typical "hippie liberal all-natural health nut" when we lived in the United States. Over time, however, my mother, and the rest of my family, became less and less liberal.

At 15, I enrolled myself into a Jerusalem high school. The narratives in my classes conflicted with my political and religious upbringing. I began to understand there were two sides to the story. After high school, I worked at a store where my closest friend was Palestinian. We shared lunches and gossiped about our co-workers, and through our interactions I realized how prejudiced I had been.

Months later, in the military, I led an intelligence team, gathering data to inform the peace negotiations between Israel and the Palestinian Authority. Aspects of intelligence-gathering may be morally questionable, but it gave me the unique opportunity to come as close as possible to reading another person's mind. We spent long hours learning everything about the "enemy" only to discover that they ate, slept, fought and loved just like we did. There was a wide gap between my family's beliefs about the enemy's thoughts and their actual thoughts.

My experiences growing up in the midst of an ongoing conflict fraught with violence and political volatility and motivated me to work on bringing people together.

My experiences growing up in the midst of an ongoing conflict fraught with violence and political volatility motivated me to work on bringing people together. Whether the conflict is between Israelis and Palestinians, Black and white people, or liberals and conservatives, I'm looking for ways to move beyond dehumanization and toward empathy and compassion.

My youngest sister, who was born a few months before the second intifada broke out and has known nothing but conflict her entire life, has chosen a different path. Rather than resolving to bring people together, she is working hard to keep them apart. She works for Lehava, which means "flame" in Hebrew, but in this case is also an acronym for the Hebrew phrase "For the Prevention of Assimilation in the Holy Land." Lehava fights to prevent "relationships between Jewish girls and Arabs, non-Jews, and foreign workers." Lehava has been described on several occasions as a far-right and Jewish supremacist group, and elected officials in Israel have embarked on the process of declaring it a terrorist organization.

Given my sister's chosen career path, telling her that my non-Jewish partner had proposed was difficult. She had previously told me (on national television) that she would be happy if he broke up with me, since then there would be a chance of me marrying a Jewish guy. Needless to say, she refuses to come to the wedding.

As painful as it is to hear her talk about how my actions are a threat to the Jewish nation, I know that hating her for saying hateful thing will result in nothing but more hate. Instead, I've chosen to focus on loving her.

The only solution I have is to try and pull her in, rather than push her away. As painful as it is to hear her talk about how my actions are a threat to the Jewish nation, I know that hating her for saying hateful things will result in nothing but more hate. Instead, I've chosen to focus on loving her. I love her for being passionate about her values. I love her for stepping outside her comfort zone. I love her for reasons unrelated to her zealousness — she's smart, funny, caring and beautiful, inside and out.

During my latest trip to Israel, my sister and I didn't shy away from tough discussions. We talked about our conflicting values and beliefs. She expressed sadness about the sinful life she thinks I live; I expressed similar sorrow at hearing her talk about Palestinians. We agreed to disagree, then disagreed some more. But we also talked about other things. She took time off work to be my personal chauffeur for the week because I'd gotten too used to American roads and driving in Israel terrified me. I beat her at multiple games of Scrabble. We prepared meals together. I teased her about being too picky in her search for a husband, but also gave her some stern sisterly advice about not settling for someone she doesn't like.

In his excellent book, *The War for Kindness: Building Empathy in a Fractured World*, Jamil Zaki tells the story of Tony, a Canadian ex-neo-Nazi. One of the pivotal moments in Tony's transformation is when he confesses his deeds to his (Jewish) therapist Dov, who accepts him with open arms:

Here was this man who loved me and wanted to heal me, and here was I, a person who had once advocated for the annihilation of his people.

Tony felt he didn't deserve a shred of compassion from Dov, but Dov extended it nonetheless. This cracked Tony open. He'd created a surface of hatred to cover his shame and loneliness. Once someone accepted him warts and all, he no longer needed it.

I don't live in fantasyland. I don't think my sister will drop her beliefs on intermarriage just because I love her and treat her kindly. But I do think that by responding with love, I might be able to prevent her extremism from getting worse. Perhaps by regularly exposing her to the fact that I'm in a relationship that makes me happier than I've ever been, she will soften her views, even just a little. Or at least, maybe she will continue talking to me rather than cutting me off entirely, as some family members do in such cases.

Though it is (arguably) easier to love someone if they're related to you, this approach might be helpful in other contexts. Many people would rather shut down or at least disengage from discussion with people whom they view as intolerant, whether the intolerance comes from their religiosity, political ideology, or some other driving force. But they should consider how counterproductive this approach is. It does nothing to change the intolerant person, and may even motivate them to become even more intolerant. Instead, approaching them with kindness, accepting them, and, yes, even loving them, may have a more positive effect.■

Impossible pork, *continued from page 26*

shirts don't have the four corners that triggered the Biblical requirement of tzitzit? On a larger scale, the Shabbat elevator, the Kosher Lamp, as well as a host of technologies developed by Israel's Tzomet Institute, all employ new technologies to circumvent existing rules while keeping within the letter, if not the spirit, of the law.

Sometimes Jews have allowed these rules to be eroded because the stakes didn't feel high enough, but when a new technology threatens to undermine Jewish tradition, the rabbis have tended to respond appropriately.

The best example of this is the ban on turning electricity on or off on Shabbat. For millennia, the experience of Shabbat was shaped by the Biblical prohibition on lighting fires; with the advent of electricity at the turn of the last century, that ban threatened to become irrelevant. Orthodox rabbis responded by coalescing around the argument that electricity is fire, or was covered by some other well-established prohibition. That electricity is not actually fire didn't matter; the argument carried because it was understood by leadership and laity alike that electricity was coming to replace fire, to do everything fire could do and more. Today, the restrictions on electricity are a cornerstone of the Shabbat experience, so fundamental that it is hard for many observant Jews to imagine Shabbat without it.

Is Impossible Pork the 21st century version of electricity? There's a good case to be made that it is. The rise of plant-based meat substitutes has been spurred by ethical and environmental concerns around meat production. Their success depends on their being so delicious that they escape from the boutique realm of eco-conscious consumers and take on the same cultural role as meat. That Burger King offers an Impossible Whopper signals that this is already happening, as does the fact that major meat producers have invested heavily in the growth of plant-based alternatives to their own products.

These developments should be celebrated—but rather than diminishing meat's special cultural meaning, its substitutes have only served to burnish it.

Meat has a special significance in Judaism, too. God is a big fan of animal sacrifices, and many holidays still involve the ritual or cultural use of meat — and inasmuch as meat matters, it matters that the meat isn't pork. It's irrelevant that the Ancient Israelite origins of the ban are obscure; it's enough that modern observant Jews (and Muslims) still treat the ban on pig products as a cultural touchstone. We should be glad that technology has created a meaningful difference between veggie beef and veggie pork — but if the distinction is there, the ban on the pork must be, too.

The OU's ruling does not yet amount to a full-fledged policy that all fake meat should be treated like real meat; a kosher restaurant can still serve plant-based "cheeseburgers" without fear that its license will be revoked. But even if it was not intended to be profound, the OU's decision is an example of how all regulators, both religious and governmental, can fight back against the cultural unmooring that the present onslaught of new technology continues to cause. In this unprecedented age, creating continuity between the past and the present serves to ground society in the wisdom and norms of its own past. ■

Calendar

November 2021

As our community eases into in-person events with sensitivity to changing pandemic safety, always check websites or call for updates before planning to attend anything listed here and for prayer services.

Monday 1

Talmud Study with Rabbi Dobrusin: BIC. 4 p.m.

Adult B'nai Mitzvah Class: TBE. 6 p.m.

Tuesday 2

Twenty-five minute Mindfulness with Jewish Spiritual Director Linda Greene: TBE and Pardes Hannah. 8:30 a.m.

Talmud Tuesdays w/ Rabbi Alter: TBE. 11a.m. and 8 p.m.

Spirituality Book Club with Cantor Emerita Annie Rose: TBE. Contact cantorannie@gmail.com for details and to join. 7:30 p.m.

Tea and Torah on Tuesday–for Women: Chabad. 8 p.m.

Wednesday 3

Lunch and Learn - Personalities of our Forefathers and Foremothers: AAOM. In the book of Breishit/Genesis, we meet our forefathers and mothers. Through their actions, each one demonstrates their own unique characteristics. The Ramban teaches ma'aseh avot siman l'banim - the actions of our forefathers has bearing on our own. In this four part class we will explore the forefathers and mothers personalities and think about the implications in our own lives. Yitzhak: The Power of Love 12:30 p.m.

Yidish tish (Virtual) (Yiddish Conversation & Reading Group): Zoom. About 45 minutes each of conversation and reading. Free and open to all those interested in Yiddish language, literature, and culture, no matter what level of proficiency. For more information, to get the link, and to make certain that we are meeting on a specific day, please e-mail Elliot H. Gertel at egertel@umich.edu at least one day before scheduled meeting day every Wednesday (except major Jewish holidays). 2 p.m.

Meditation with Claire Weiner: TBE. 5 p.m.

Rosh Chodesh Kislev Circle: Pardes Hannah. 7 p.m.

Outsmarting Antisemitism: Chabad. Against the backdrop of a recent uptick in antisemitism and the increased anxiety it has brought to the Jewish community, this course sets out to beat this age-old cancer — with purpose, positivity, and pride. Marshaling historical analysis, Talmudic sources, Jewish mysticism, and contemporary expert analysis, the four lessons of this course provide insight, perspective, practical direction, and personal reassurance to motivate and inspire proud, fearless Jewish life. 7:30 p.m.

Theology Book Club: BIC 8 p.m.

Thursday4 Rosh Hodesh Kislev

Jewish Prayer: Finding Our Way in the History, Meaning, and Spirituality of our Worship Service: TBE. Rabbi Whinston leads discussion. 10:30 a.m. and 7:30 p.m.

Spirituality Book Club with Cantor Emerita Annie Rose: TBE. Contact cantorannie@gmail.com for details and to join. 12:00 p.m.

Backdoor Food Pantry Open: TBE. 4-7 p.m.

Women's Rosh Chodesh Circle - Kislev: TBE. 6:30 p.m.

Talmud–Jewish Civil Law: Chabad. 8 p.m..

Friday 5

Candle Lighting 6:05 p.m. Toldot

Rosh Chodesh Kislev Online Minyan: Pardes Hannah. 9 a.m.

Saturday 6

Havdallah 7:05 p.m.

Torah Study: TBE. Zoom. Weekly discussion of the Torah portion led by Rabbi Whinston 8:50-9:50 a.m.

Bite Size Shabbat in Burns Park: BIC and AAOM. 11:30 am for Tot Shabbat (2-5 year olds) and Parsha Party (5-8 year olds).

Women's Rosh Chodesh Group (in person): AAOM. 8 p.m.

Sunday 7

Book Group: AARC. Will discuss *Outwitting History: The Amazing Adventures of a Man Who Rescued a Million Yiddish Books*, by Aaron Lansky. Email Greg Saltzman, gsaltzman@albion.edu 11:30 a.m. to -1 p.m.

Tanya–Jewish Mysticism: Chabad. Delve into the basic text of Chassidim and discover the beauty and depth of Judaism. **11 a.m.**

Monday 8

"I Know Who Caused COVID-19": Pandemics and Xenophobia: Frankel Center. Sander Gilman, Emory University, Zhou Xun, University of Essex, with the Jewish Muslim Research Network. Zoom Webinar, 9 a.m.

Talmud Study with Rabbi Dobrusin: BIC. 4 p.m.

Adult B'nai Mitzvah Class: TBE. 6 p.m.

Women's Torah Study: TBE. For questions, contact Cantor Regina Hayut at cantorhayut@templebethemeth.org. 7 p.m.

Tuesday 9

Twenty-five minute Mindfulness with Jewish Spiritual Director Linda Greene: TBE and Pardes Hannah. 8:30 a.m.

Talmud Tuesdays w/ Rabbi Alter: TBE. 11a.m. and 8 p.m.

Tea and Torah on Tuesday–for Women: Chabad. 8 p.m.

Wednesday 10

Yidish tish Conversation & Reading Group: Every Wednesday, see above. 2 p.m.

Meditation with Claire Weiner: TBE. 5 p.m.

ADL State of Hate Briefing: BIC. Join via Zoom This conversation will examine findings from ADL's Annual Audit of Anti-Semitic Incidents, recent incidents and trends in antisemitism and hate, as well as resources so you can better respond to hate and bigotry in your community. 7 p.m.

Outsmarting Antisemitism: Chabad. 7:30 p.m.

Theology Book Club: BIC 8 p.m.

Thursday 11

Jewish Prayer: Finding Our Way in the History, Meaning, and Spirituality of our Worship Service: TBE. Rabbi Whinston leads discussion. 10:30 a.m. and 7:30 p.m.

Biblical Book Club: TBE. Cantor Hayut leads discussion. 11 a.m.

Backdoor Food Pantry Open: TBE. 4-7 p.m.

Magic and its Malcontents: Historiography as Heresiology: Frankel Center. Dr. Shaily Patel. Zoom Webinar, 4 to 6 p.m.

Talmud–Jewish Civil Law: Chabad. 8 p.m..

Friday 12

Candle Lighting 4:58 p.m. Vayeitzei

Religion and Materiality: Re-thinking a Complex Relation from the Angle of Food: Frankel Center. Dr. Birgit Meyer. Zoom webinar 3 to 5 p.m.

WTBE Hanukkah Bazaar: TBE. 3-7:30 p.m.

Saturday 13

Havdallah 5:59 p.m.

Torah Study: TBE. Zoom. Weekly discussion of the Torah portion led by Rabbi Whinston 8:50-9:50 a.m.

Second Saturday Shabbat Morning Service: AARC. Led by Rabbi Ora Nitkin-Kaner. Everyone is welcome! Zoom link will be sent out the week before the event. Ta'Shma at 10 a.m. Service 10:30 a.m.to noon.

Bite Size Shabbat in Burns Park: BIC and AAOM. 11:30 am for Tot Shabbat (2-5 year olds) and Parsha Party (5-8 year olds).

Shabbat Morning Service: Pardes Hannah. 10 a.m.

Sunday 14

WTBE Hanukkah Bazaar: TBE. 7 a.m.-5 p.m.

Tanya–Jewish Mysticism: Chabad. Delve into the basic text of Chassidim and discover the beauty and depth of Judaism. **11 a.m.**

Family Social Justice Playdate: Bend the Arc Jewish Action: Outdoor focused on welcoming refugees for children and families with learning activities, community building, and service opportunities. At Allmendinger Park. Email bendthearc.A2@gmail.com. 4 p.m.

Living Room Lecture – How to Build Wealth: A Primer on Saving for Retirement: BIC. Presented by Ellen Abramson. What is compound interest? Why did Albert Einstein say it was the most powerful force in the world? Learn the simple steps you can take today to harness the power of compound interest to dependably create wealth for you and your family. 1 p.m.

Monday 15

Talmud Study with Rabbi Dobrusin: BIC. 4 p.m.

Adult B'nai Mitzvah Class: TBE. 6 p.m.

Women's Torah Study: TBE. For questions, contact Cantor Regina Hayut at cantorhayut@templebethemeth.org. 7 p.m.

Tuesday 16

Twenty-five minute Mindfulness with Jewish Spiritual Director Linda Greene: TBE and Pardes Hannah. 8:30 a.m.

Talmud Tuesdays w/ Rabbi Alter: TBE. 11a.m. and 8 p.m.

Lunch and Learn: AAOM. Parshat Vayishlach Wrestling with Identity. 12:30 p.m.

Caregiver Conversations: JFS. Educational, facilitated by a licensed JFS Social Worker, and is open to anyone who cares for someone aged 60+. To register visit jfsannarbor.org. 3 to 4:30 p.m.

Tea and Torah on Tuesday–for Women: Chabad. 8 p.m.

Wednesday 17

Yidish tish Conversation & Reading Group: Every Wednesday, see above. 2 p.m.

Meditation with Claire Weiner: TBE. 5 p.m.

Lior Project webinar: Teen Mental Health Resilience: JFS. 7:30 to 8:30 p.m.

Outsmarting Antisemitism: Chabad. 7:30 p.m.

Theology Book Club: BIC 8 p.m.

Thursday 18

Jewish Prayer: Finding Our Way in the History, Meaning, and Spirituality of our Worship Service: TBE. Rabbi Whinston leads discussion. 10:30 a.m. and 7:30 p.m.

Biblical Book Club: TBE. Cantor Hayut leads discussion. 11 a.m.

Backdoor Food Pantry Open: TBE. 4-7 p.m.

Talmud–Jewish Civil Law: Chabad. 8 p.m..

Friday 19

Candle Lighting 4:58 p.m. Vayishlach

WTBE Hanukkah Bazaar: TBE. 3-7:30 p.m.

Saturday 20

Havdallah 5:54 p.m.

Torah Study: TBE. Zoom. Weekly discussion of the Torah portion led by Rabbi Whinston 8:50-9:50 a.m.

Bite Size Shabbat in Burns Park: BIC and AAOM. 11:30 am for Tot Shabbat (2-5 year olds) and Parsha Party (5-8 year olds).

Sunday 21

WTBE Hanukkah Bazaar: TBE. 2-5 p.m.

Tanya–Jewish Mysticism: Chabad. Delve into the basic text of Chassidim and discover the beauty and depth of Judaism. **11 a.m.**

Ann Arbor Jewish Book Festival: Cory Rosen. *Your Story, Well Told: Creative Strategies to Develop and Perform Stories that Wow an Audience*. 7 p.m.

Monday 22

Ann Arbor Jewish Book Festival: Ami Ayalon: *Friendly Fire: How Israel Became Its Own Worst Enemy and the Hope for Its Future*. 1 p.m.

Talmud Study with Rabbi Dobrusin: BIC. 4 p.m.

Adult B'nai Mitzvah Class: TBE. 6 p.m.

Women's Torah Study: TBE. For questions, contact Cantor Regina Hayut at cantorhayut@templebethemeth.org. 7 p.m.

Tuesday 23

Twenty-five minute Mindfulness with Jewish Spiritual Director Linda Greene: TBE and Pardes Hannah. 8:30 a.m.

Talmud Tuesdays w/ Rabbi Alter: TBE. 11a.m. and 8 p.m.

Tea and Torah on Tuesday–for Women: Chabad. 8 p.m.

Wednesday 24

Yidish tish Conversation & Reading Group: Every Wednesday, see above. 2 p.m.

Meditation with Claire Weiner: TBE. 5 p.m.

Outsmarting Antisemitism: Chabad. 7:30 p.m.

Theology Book Club: BIC 8 p.m.

Thursday 25

Jewish Prayer: Finding Our Way in the History, Meaning, and Spirituality of our Worship Service: TBE. Rabbi Whinston leads discussion. 10:30 a.m. and 7:30 p.m.

Backdoor Food Pantry Open: TBE. 4-7 p.m.

Torah on Tap: AAOM. Being the Light: A Chanukah text study (in person). 8 p.m.

Talmud–Jewish Civil Law: Chabad. 8 p.m..

Friday 26

Candle Lighting 4:47 p.m. Vayeishev

Fourth Friday Kabbalat Shabbat. AARC. On Zoom, e-mail: aarcgillian@gmail.com. . 6:30 p.m.

Saturday 27

Havdallah 5:51 p.m.

Torah Study: TBE. Zoom. Weekly discussion of the Torah portion led by Rabbi Whinston 8:50-9:50 a.m.

Sunday 28 First Candle of Hanukah

Candle making for kids. AAOM In person. 4:30 p.m. followed by communal candle lighting and sufganiyot donuts at 5:30 p.m.

Tanya–Jewish Mysticism: Chabad. Delve into the basic text of Chassidim and discover the beauty and depth of Judaism. **11 a.m.**

Hanukkah Cookie Baking and Decorating Event: TBE. 2 p.m.

Monday 29

Second Candle of Hanukah

Ann Arbor Jewish Book Festival: Heather Cabot. *The New Chardonnay: The Unlikely Story of How Marijuana Went Mainstream*. 1 p.m.

Talmud Study with Rabbi Dobrusin: BIC. 4 p.m.

Adult B'nai Mitzvah Class: TBE. 6 p.m.

A Conversation with Scott Ellsworth, Historian and New York Times Bestselling Author: TBE. 7:30 p.m.

Women's Torah Study: TBE. For questions, contact Cantor Regina Hayut at cantorhayut@templebethemeth.org. 7 p.m.

Tuesday 30

Third Candle of Hanukah

Twenty-five minute Mindfulness with Jewish Spiritual Director Linda Greene: TBE and Pardes Hannah. 8:30 a.m.

Talmud Tuesdays w/ Rabbi Alter: TBE. 11a.m. and 8 p.m.

Ann Arbor Jewish Book Festival: Naomi Ragen. *An Observant Wife: A Novel*. 1 p.m.

Ann Arbor Jewish Book Festival: Jeffrey Veidlinger. *In the Midst of Civilized Europe: The Pogroms of 1918-1921 and the Onset of the Holocaust*. 7 p.m.

Phone numbers, websites and addresses of organizations frequently listed in the calendar:

Ann Arbor Orthodox Minyan (AAOM): 1429 Hill Street, 248-408-3269, annarborminyan.org

Ann Arbor Reconstructionist Congregation **(AARC):** 2935 Birch Hollow Drive, 734.445.1910, aarecon.org

Beth Israel Congregation (BIC): 2000 Washtenaw Ave, 734-665-9897, bethisrael-aa.org

Chabad House: 715 Hill Street, 734-995-3276, jewmich.com

Frankel Center: 202 S. Thayer St., lsa.umich.edu/judaic/

Jewish Community Center (JCC): 2935 Birch Hollow Drive, 745-971-0990, jccannarbor.org

Jewish Cultural Society (JCS): 2935 Birch Hollow Drive, 734-975-9872, jewishculturalsociety.org

Jewish Family Services (JFS): 2245 South State Street, 734-769-0209, jfsannarbor.org

Jewish Federation: 2939 Birch Hollow Drive, 734-677-0100, jewishannarbor.org

Pardes Hannah: 2010 Washtenaw Ave, 734-761-5324, pardeshannah.org

Temple Beth Emeth (TBE): 2309 Packard Road, 734-665-4744, templebethemeth.org

UM Hillel: 1429 Hill Street 734-769-0500, michiganhillel.or

Beth Israel Congregation November events

Talmud Study with Rabbi Dobrusin
Mondays at 4 p.m.
Rabbi Dobrusin facilitates a Talmud class online via Zoom on Monday afternoons from 3:30–4:30. Join us for a study of a chapter of the Talmudic tractate of Sotah. This chapter is unusual in that it includes not only the traditional legal discussions which are the hallmark of the Talmud but also contains several lengthy sections of midrash, commentaries on stories from the Torah. We will read the text in the original Hebrew and Aramaic with English translations also provided. All discussions will be in English, and no previous Talmud study experience is necessary. All are welcome!

ADL State of Hate Briefing
Wednesday, November 10, 7 p.m.
Join us via Zoom on Wednesday, November 10 at 7 p.m. for a State of Hate briefing with members of the ADL (Anti-Defamation League) Michigan regional office. This program will provide an overview of ADL's regional and national work in "stopping the defamation of the Jewish people and securing justice and fair treatment to all." This conversation will examine findings from ADL's Annual Audit of Anti-Semitic Incidents, recent incidents and trends in anti-semitism and hate, as well as resources so you can better respond to hate and bigotry in your community. Register online on the Beth Israel website (www.bethisrael-aa.org)

Living Room Lectures – How to Build Wealth: A Primer on Savings for Retirement Presented by Ellen Abramson
Sunday, November 14, 1 p.m.
What is compound interest? Why did Albert Einstein say it was the most powerful force in the world? Learn the simple steps you can take today to harness the power of compound interest to dependably create wealth for you and your family. Nearly $100,000 in debt — not counting the mortgage — is where David and Ellen Abramson found themselves the day they took a hard look at their finances. That day, they began a journey to discover how to live a great life while spending less than they earned. What emerged was a life free of money-related stress and one in which it became possible to build wealth. Living Room Lectures is a partnership of Beth Israel Congregation and the Ann Arbor JCC. Register online on the Beth Israel website (www.bethisrael-aa.org)

Theology Book Club — Online
Wednesdays at 8 p.m.
Beth Israel Congregation's Theology Book Club welcomes you to join them to read together and discuss books on Jewish thought and beliefs. The books are in English. Contact Paul Shifrin at (248) 514-7276 for more information.

In Person and Online Services

Everyone is welcome to join Beth Israel for services, classes and events. Services are being held in person and virtually. Below is a list of the links to participate virtually in services at Beth Israel. Beth Israel is now live streaming services on the Beth Israel YouTube channel (Beth Israel Congregation AA MI). All links will also be available on the Beth Israel homepage (www.bethisrael-aa.org). Please note that passwords are used. Contact the office to get the passwords at office@bethisrael-aa.org.

Evening Minyan – Virtual only
Sunday at 5 p.m.
Monday–Thursday at 7:30 p.m.

Friday Evening Services – In person and virtual
Kabbalat Shabbat Service at 6 p.m.

Shabbat Morning Services – In person and virtual
Saturday at 9:30 a.m. ■

AA Orthodox Minyan November events

For all events, please contact rabbayael@annarborminyan.org for location or with any questions.

Bite Size Shabbat in Burns Park
Join Beth Israel Congregation and the AAOM at 11:30 a.m. for Tot Shabbat (2-–5 year olds) and Parsha Party (5–8 year olds). It's a great opportunity for families to celebrate Shabbat together!

Lunch and Learn - Personalities of our Forefathers and Foremothers Yitzhak: The Power of Love
Wednesday, November 3, 12:30 p.m.

Rosh Chodesh Women's Group (in person)
Saturday, November 6, 8 p.m.

Lunch and Learn - Parshat Vayishlach: Wrestling with Identity
Tuesday, November 16, 12:30 p.m.

Torah on Tap - Being the Light: A Chanukah text study (in person)
Thursday, November 25, 8 p.m.

Candle Making for Kids
Followed by communal candle lighting and sufganiyot donuts at 5:30 p.m. (in person)
Sunday, November 28, 4:30 p.m. ■

The quiet of Cheshvan at HDS

By Rabbi Will Keller

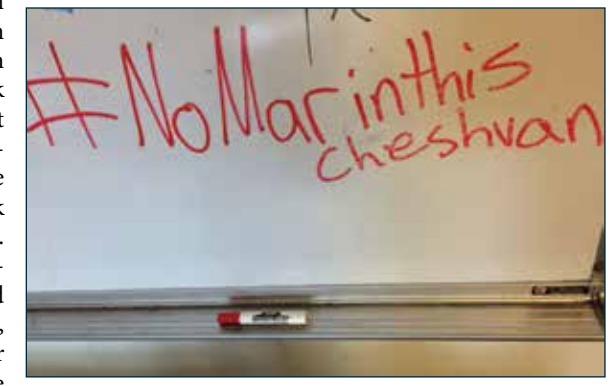
Over the past several weeks, I have noticed a trend emerging in my weekly announcements to the Hebrew Day School community. Generally, I pointed out the upcoming holiday, the unique qualities that define that holiday, and how that holiday makes that specific time of year special. It is indeed true that the reasoning, evolution, and traditions of each holiday are unique and have deliberate lessons we can glean at various times of the year. Furthermore, if we step back to look at the landscape of the Jewish year holistically, we find that holidays punctuate our year to give a well-rounded understanding of emotions, thought processes, and experiences that align with a spiritual existence.

I have come to appreciate the cycle of the Jewish year and look forward to the guidance that emerges from the calendar. For example, the experiences of reflection, contemplation, and atonement that accompany the month of Elul, through the observance of Rosh HaShana and Yom Kippur, set a positive tone for the new school year. The sense of identity and purpose of Chanukah illuminates what could otherwise be a dreary winter.

Interestingly, of the twelve months of the Jewish calendar, almost all of them include holidays, celebrations, and commemorations other than Shabbat, which we celebrate each week. The month of Cheshvan, sometimes referred to as Marcheshvan, stands alone without additional holidays.

We learn in the Jerusalem Talmud that Rabbi Simeon ben Lakish said: "The Torah given to Moses was written with black fire upon white fire." Contrast between Cheshvan and the other months of the year feels like a similar paradigm. The black fire are the words of the Torah. They are important as they provide narrative, structure, and understanding. The white fire, the context and backdrop for the Torah, helps us to integrate these ideas into the fabric of our lives. So too, the holidays of the year emphasize the values and divine dialogue in which we are meant to participate and it is up to us to integrate those experiences into our daily lives throughout the rest of the year.

The prefix *Mar* as in Marcheshvan, has multiple meanings. One of the ways we interpret the word Mar is to translate it as bitter. One could see Cheshvan as a month of bitterness, lonely without the company of holidays or even somber days. Over the past few years, a growing movement of clergy has reshifted how we think about Cheshvan. Rabba Yaffa Epstein, Rabba Yael Keller, and others have begun a movement called #NoMarInThisCheshvan meant to encourage us to find the blessings in each moment. The beauty of #NoMarInThisCheshvan is that we are encouraged to recognize both the holiness of the obvious moments of celebration and the holiness that is always with us if we are able to stop to bear witness.



In the short time we have been in school this year, I have been amazed at our team's ability to see the potential to fill each moment with learning. The HDS staff supports our students' creative sparks during classroom learning, and also in all the moments that fill a school day. I look forward to both experiencing the holidays of the rest of the year and celebrating the quiet moments in between that our students, staff, and community will fill with holiness ourselves. ■

Let's go to Morocco!

Lonnie Sussman, special to the WJN

I have always been super nervous about traveling. I am a terrible planner, unable to make even the simplest of decisions like which flight to choose or place to stay. My preference would be to get into the car (with my husband) and drive, somewhere, anywhere. We would stop when we needed to stretch, find a motel along the way, finish our bag of potato chips, and start in on the fruit and enjoy a conversation or the newest book on tape.

On the other hand, when I have had the privilege of planned travel it was because someone else planned the trip (not my husband but a dear friend). I didn't even plan the destination! Every trip taken this way has been amazing and full of learning, adventures, and building new relationships. The last time a trip like this happened was 2019. We had plans to go to Morocco in 2020 and that trip may still happen, sometime, somehow. In the meanwhile, I did go on a Zoom trip to Morocco sponsored by the Baltimore Zionist District. It was fantastic and I can't wait to go there in person.

I have finally made the decision on where and how to travel! We are going to travel via our stomachs by enjoying culinary tours and our first stop is Morocco. From my limited reading and understanding there is a very long history of Jews in Morocco. Some historians postulate that Jews accompanied Phoenician traders who sailed to the northwest African coast about 1000 BCE. Others trace the history to the destruction of the First Temple in 760 BCE, and yet others cite the wave of immigrants following the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE. Jewish groups lived alongside Berber tribes from the Atlas Mountains to the edges of the Saharan Desert. The greatest numbers of Jewish immigrants came in the late 1400s after the expulsion from Spain. The majority of the Jews left Morocco after 1948.

Here are some of the recipes they took with them to their new homes in Israel and other countries.

Matbucha or Cooked Tomato Salad

From *King Solomon's Table* by Joan Nathan.

4 cups or 8 servings

This is one of the most popular salads in Israel. It was brought by Moroccan Jews who began emigration from Morocco in the later 1940s.

3 red bell peppers
2 tbs olive oil
2 to 3 cloves of garlic, minced
7 large tomatoes, 6 chopped in chunks, 1 thinly sliced
1 tsp coriander
1 tsp ground cumin
Pinch of sugar
Salt and pepper to taste
2 tbs chopped cilantro or parsley

Preheat the oven to 450 and roast the peppers until they are charred, turn them every 10 minutes or so and it will take about 20–30 minutes. You can put them in a paper or plastic bag for about half an hour to help loosen the skins. Then peel the skins and remove the seeds and juice and slice in long slivers. Then warm the oil in a skillet over medium heat and add the garlic, then the peppers and the 6 chopped tomatoes, slowly cooking for about an hour, stirring occasionally. You are trying to reduce the liquid until it evaporates. Add the coriander, cumin, salt and pepper and a pinch of sugar. Adjust the seasonings to your taste. To serve, arrange on a flat plate and thinly slice the last tomato as decoration and sprinkle with the cilantro or parsley or basil.

Chicken with Garbanzo Beans

From *The Scent of Orange Blossoms* by Kitty Morse and Danielle Mamane.

Serves 4

This is a dish from a northern Moroccan city on the Mediterranean Sea near the Straits of Gibraltar. Everything about Morocco, from the history to the names of the cities, to the cuisine, sounds fascinating to me.

5 tbs olive oil
1 onion, finely diced
1 tsp sweet paprika
1 tsp ground turmeric
2 cloves garlic, minced
8 skinless chicken thighs
¾ cup chicken stock or water
4 eggs, lightly beaten
2 tsp salt and ground black pepper to taste
1 tsp ground cinnamon
1/8 tsp ground cayenne (optional)
1 (14-1/4 oz) can garbanzo beans, drained
1 roasted red bell pepper, finely diced
15 sprigs of parsley, minced

Add 2 tbs of the oil to a skillet and heat over medium high heat. Add the onion and cook until lightly browned, about 6–8 minutes. Meanwhile, in a large bowl, combine the remaining 3 tbs of olive oil, paprika, turmeric, and garlic and stir to blend. Coat each piece of chicken with the mixture and add to the onion. Cook, turning occasionally, until the chicken is browned, about 4–5 minutes. Add the stock, cover, and decrease the heat to medium. Cook until the chicken is tender, about 30–35 minutes, remove to a bowl and reserve the pan juices.

Preheat the oven to 425 degrees. In another bowl combine the eggs, salt and pepper, cinnamon, cayenne (if you are using it), garbanzo beans, bell pepper, and minced parsley. Add the reserved pan juices to the egg mixture and blend it well with the egg mixture. Pour back into the skillet and place the chicken thighs on top. Bake until the eggs puff up, about 15 to 20 minutes, and serve immediately.

Tanzeya, a Moroccan Sauce of Dried Fruit

From *King Solomon's Table* by Joan Nathan.

This sauce can be ordered online at nyshuk.com or you can make it yourself. Spread it on lamb, chicken, brisket, or use as jam.

1 cup each of dried plums, dried apricots, quartered dried figs, and raisins
1 cup sugar
1 stick of cinnamon
1 whole cardamom pod
1 whole allspice berry
pinch of dried chili flakes
pinch of salt.

Mix the dried fruit in a wide shallow pan and add 2 cups of hot water and let sit for 15 minutes. Then add the sugar, cinnamon stick, cardamom, allspice berry, chili flakes and salt and bring to a boil over high heat. Cook, stirring often, for 5 minutes. Reduce the heat to very low and simmer uncovered until the water has almost completely evaporated. This may take 45 minutes to an hour and be sure to stir occasionally to make sure the mixture doesn't stick to the bottom of the pan or burn. Discard the cinnamon stick, cardamom pods and allspice berry and allow the mixture to cool. Pour into a jar and refrigerate and it will last about 2 weeks.

Lamb Shanks with Caramelized Onions

This is also from *King Solomon's Table* by Joan Nathan.

The recipe serves 6 and it is served with the Tanzeya sauce. It sounds fantastic even though I've given up eating meat. If I start again this will be one of the two meals I make. The second is the chicken dish above.

6 lamb shanks (about a pound each)
Kosher salt
2 tbs neutral oil
4 large onions, thinly sliced
Pinch of saffron threads
1 cup of the dried fruit sauce, Tanzeya
1 cup blanched whole almonds, toasted for sprinkling on top

Salt the meat (just a bit) and brown the shanks in a wide casserole with a lid where you have heated the oil. Transfer to a plate when they are browned. You may have to work in batches. Add the onions to the pan and sauté until they turn brown, about 3–5 minutes. Cover the casserole, reduce the heat and simmer for about 30 minutes. You want the onions to be very soft. Preheat oven to 275 degrees. Mix the saffron with ¼ cup warm water and let it stand for 5 minutes until the water turns yellow. Add that to the casserole and stir to mix very well. Add the lamb shanks and mix again. Cover the casserole and bake in the preheated oven until the lamb is very tender, about 2 hours. Finally, stir about a cup of the Tanzeya into the onions and return the covered pan to continue cooking another 15 minutes. Garnish with the almonds and serve by itself or over couscous.

Winter squash with Caramelized Onions

From *Sephardi Cooking From Morocco* by Kitty Morris and Danielle Mamane.

Serves 4

2 pounds winter squash, peeled, seeded, and cut into 2-inch pieces
3 tbs neutral oil
¼ cup slivered almonds
3 large onions, thinly sliced
¼ cup sugar
2 tsp ground cinnamon
½ cup raisins, plumped in warm water and drained
Salt and freshly ground pepper

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees. Bake the squash pieces until tender, maybe 50–60 minutes. While it is baking, heat the oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add the almonds and fry them until golden, just 3 or 4 minutes. Transfer the almonds to paper towels to drain. Add the onions to the oil and cook, stirring occasionally, until soft, about 8–10 minutes. Add the sugar and the cinnamon and continue cooking until the onions turn brown, about 20–25 minutes more. Then add the raisins and season to taste with salt and pepper. Cook, and stir until the mixture is heated. Place the baked squash in a serving bowl and spread the onion mixture evenly over the squash and then sprinkle the fried almonds on top. This is usually served with couscous.

Kefta de Poisson, Stewed Fish Cakes with coriander and preserved (or fresh, peeled) lemons.

From *The Book of Jewish Food* by Claudia Roden

Serves 6

One of the many interesting things about Jewish Moroccan food traditions is the influences of Spain, France, and North Africa. I've written about Chraine, the Moroccan fish cooked in a spicy tomato sauce, that is one of the more common recipes. There are also recipes for fish pastilla, made with filo dough, and fish made with chickpeas and cilantro, and a fancy couscous with sardines, fennel, onion, currants, and pine nuts (soundsyummy). But here is a recipe with a simpler preparation.

Sauce

1 large onion, chopped
5 tbs neutral oil
¼ tsp turmeric
Coarsely chopped skin of 1 preserved lemon or a fresh lemon, peeled and diced
Salt and pepper (use white if you have it)
4 tbs chopped coriander or parsley

Kefta (the fish cakes)

2 lbs fish fillets (cod, haddock, or other white fleshed fish)
1 slice white bread, crusts removed and soaked in water and squeezed dry or ½ cup dried breadcrumbs
½ onion, finely chopped or grated
Salt and pepper (white if you have it)
½ tsp mace
¼ tsp turmeric
½ tsp powdered ginger
4 tbs chopped coriander or parsley
1 egg

Begin with the sauce. Fry the onions in the oil until soft, then add the turmeric, the preserved or fresh lemon, salt, pepper, and coriander.

Process the bread, onion, spices in a food processor. Add the fish and process to a soft paste. Wet your hands and then take some of the fish mixture and roll into a ball the size of a clementine. Flatten slightly and put the fish cake into the sauce in the frying pan. Sauté gently on low heat for about 15–20 minutes, turning over once.

Stuffed Figs with Almonds

From *The Gourmet Jewish Cook* by Judy Zeidler

1/3 cup plus 12 whole blanched almonds
1 oz semisweet chocolate, grated
12 large, dried figs

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Place the almonds on a foil-lined baking sheet and bake for 5 minutes until they are lightly golden. Blend 1/3 of a cup until finely ground but reserve 12 whole almonds. Mix with the grated chocolate. Remove the stems from the figs with a knife or small scissors. Carefully press or hollow out each fig and stuff them with the ground almond and chocolate mixture. Pinch the opening firmly and place the stuffed figs, stem side up, back on the foil-lined baking sheet for another 5 minutes. Turn them over and bake for another 5 minutes. Press a whole almond into each fig and reseal. ■

6 Jewish delis run by women that you need to know about

Rachel Ringler, this article originally appeared on The Nosher.

Not long ago, there were ominous reports about the fate of Jewish delis. Lovers of pastrami and chopped liver wrung their hands.

While it's undeniable that there are far fewer Jewish delis today than there were a generation ago — David Sax, author of *Save the Deli*, calls them "a dying breed" — a revival is underway, in many cases led by women.

That wasn't always the case in a male-dominated industry. But in the past five years, several delis owned and run by women have joined the Jewish food landscape, putting their own stamp on the Jewish deli. We've rounded up some of the best.

Daughter's Deli

Those who love deli and have been to Los Angeles know Langer's Deli. In 2018, Trisha Langer, granddaughter of Langer's founders, opened Daughter's Deli in West Hollywood. The menu is classic deli fare — hot pastrami, potato latkes, lox with a schmear — but with a modern aesthetic. The blintzes and knishes are delicately sized, and while matzah ball soup is on the menu, chopped liver and mushroom barley soup are not.

In homage to her roots, Langer named sandwiches for family members, like The Papa sandwich, stuffed with hot pastrami and Swiss cheese, for her grandfather, Langer's founder. Her baby is the dessert business: chocolate chip cookies, New York-style cheesecake and her own version of black and white cookies, made without lemon zest.

Call Your Mother

Daniela Moreira is the chef at Call Your Mother, a "Jew-ish" deli in Washington, D.C., founded in 2019, which she runs with her partner, Andrew Dana. Their menu is influenced by nostalgia, as well as the flavors Moreira and Dana love. As a nod to her South American background, for instance, Moreira put a Latin Pastrami sandwich on the menu: pastrami, spicy herb mayo, veggie slaw and jalapenos on rye. For dessert, babka and black and white cookies stuffed with dulce de leche sit alongside peanut butter-pretzel doughnuts.

Moreira is involved in more than just the food. She and her partner offer their staff English lessons, gym memberships and classes with trainers who teach them how to care for their bodies.

Edith's

When you're next in New York, take the subway to Williamsburg, Brooklyn, and stop in at newly opened Edith's. Owner Elyssa Heller gathers elements of world Jewish cuisine and applies them in fresh and unexpected ways.

Her most popular item is a bagel filled with bacon, egg and cheese — with a latke for extra crunch. Her bagels, by the way, are twisted, a reference to the original twisted Polish bread from Krakow, the bagel's ancestor.

The cooks at Edith's use a "no waste" concept. Instead of making matzah balls with matzah meal, for instance, they make dumplings with day-old bread mixed and schmaltz.

"We take historical elements and incorporate them into our food," Heller says.

They use every part of the fish, too, which they smoke in-house. Expect to find their softly scrambled eggs topped with salmon skin "gribenes."

Solomon's

Sacramento California has a vibrant food scene, but it was missing a Jewish deli. Jami Goldstene and Andrea Lepore remedied that situation when they opened Solomon's in July 2019, named for Russ Solomon, founder of Tower Records and local Jewish boy who loved deli. While inspired by New York Jewish delis, this establishment also features street food that you can find in the countries where Tower Records has stores.

The Patti, their most popular sandwich named for Solomon's wife, combines scrambled eggs and white cheddar with aioli in a warm Japanese milk bun or bagel of choice. It sits alongside The Bangkok — fried chicken, red Thai curry sauce, kewpie aioli, turmeric pickles, cabbage and cilantro on a warm Japanese milk bun.

The cocktails here are designed with the same approach; a bloody Mary flavored with turmeric and finished with dill pickles sits alongside etrog liquor and Japanese whisky. It's a place, the founders say, "where everyone could find something."

Mamaleh's

When Rachel Miller Munzer and her partners opened their Boston Jewish deli in 2016, they named it Mamaleh's, a Yiddish word of endearment. Munzer's husband, Alon, was moved by David Sax's book *Save The Deli*, about the decline of the Jewish deli. The husband-wife team felt "an obligation to save a dying art."

Their food, Munzer says, is "from the heart, made with thought, of the highest quality." You can get a pastrami-chopped liver sandwich or a rich bowl of chicken soup filled with chunks of chicken, carrots, celery and one or two large matzah balls. And if you are dreaming of a hot tongue sandwich, look no further. Their restaurant even has a gift shop where you can pick up lactaid pills.

"It's the Jewish disease," Munzer said. "We need it available!"

Russ & Daughters

These Jewish delis are all relatively new and one could say they stand on the shoulders of another Jewish eatery — an appetizing shop, not a deli — based in New York. Russ & Daughters was the first American business to have "& Daughters" in its name. In fact, says Niki Russ Federman, a fourth-generation owner, when Joel Russ named his business in 1935, "people assumed the owners were a Mr. Russ and a Mr. Daughters."

Women have been working and running the business from its earliest days.

"Today, almost all of our managers are women," Federman said. "And at times we have more women working behind the counter than men."

How does Federman see the future of Jewish food?

"It's bright!" she said.

She exhorts new businesses to "respect tradition and find their own voice to put their own spin on what they are doing." ■

JCC book festival plans sponsor brunch on December 5 featuring foodie Avery Robinson

Leslie Bash, special to the WJN

This year's Ann Arbor Jewish Community Center's Jewish Book Festival will take place virtually from Sunday, November 21 through Thursday, December 16 and will feature 24 authors. The Book Festival committee and Jewish Cultural Arts and Education Director, Noemi Herzig, have been working since last spring to choose the authors and create unique author programs for the Ann Arbor community.

The annual book festival sponsor event will take place on Sunday, December 5. There are multiple sponsor categories ranging from $180 to $10,000 and we hope community members will make generous contributions to help us bring these authors to our community.

Sponsors will be treated to a delicious gourmet brunch catered by Amanda's Kitchen. These meals can be picked up at Beth Israel Congregation, 2000 Washtenaw Avenue, from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. on December 5. We will also be featuring special sparkling drinks, a fad in Israel right now, which are featured in a new book *Gazoz: The Art of Making Magical Seasonal Sparkling Drinks* by Benny Briga and Adeena Sussman. Sponsors donating over $500 will also receive a copy of the book. In addition, all sponsors will be listed in Book Festival promotional material.

At 1 p.m., the entire community can tune in to a special program honoring the sponsors and featuring Avery Robinson. Robinson will be creating an afternoon of fun in the kitchen in a cooking demonstration event on learning how to make gravlox (cured, not smoked salmon) and bagels. Robinson is a culinary historian, educator and researcher originally from the Detroit area. He holds an MA from the University of Michigan in Judaic Studies where he focused on Jewish and American culinary history. In 2016-17, on a Dorot Fellowship, Robinson explored diaspora and Israeli and Palestinian foodways as part of a gastro-diplomacy project aimed at understanding how food can be used to bridge intolerance. Robinson's day job is as a researcher and copyeditor for the Posen Library of Jewish Culture and Civilization. He recently founded a nonprofit Rye Revival, which promotes rye as a climate change mitigation strategy and beneficial crop for healthier soils, animals and people. ■

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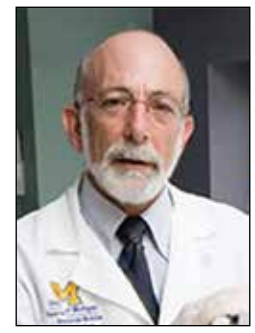
Obituary

Remembering Dr. Richard Swartz

Dr. Richard Swartz of Ann Arbor, Michigan, passed away on October 11, 2021. Dr. Subramaniam Pennathur, Chief and Professor, Division of Nephrology and Dr. Michael Heung, Professor, Division of Nephrology have provided the following words in memory of Dr. Swartz.

"For those of you who may not be fully familiar with Dr. Swartz's long association with the University and his legacy in nephrology, here is a brief history. Dr. Swartz received his BS and MD degrees from the University of Michigan in 1968 and 1970, respectively. Following an internship and residency at Boston City Hospital, he completed a nephrology fellowship at Beth Israel Hospital, Harvard Medical School. Dr. Swartz was recruited to join the University of Michigan faculty in 1977, and was promoted to Professor in 1987. He transitioned to active emeritus status in 2010, but remained busy clinically, seeing both peritoneal dialysis patients and general nephrology patients in the outpatient setting.



Dr. Swartz is widely regarded for his expertise in CKD/ESRD, and on end-of-life care for patients with these and other conditions. He has published more than 100 peer-reviewed articles and has given several presentations at national meetings. Dr. Swartz was on the editorial board of the American Journal of Kidney Disease and served as the assistant editor for Advances in Renal Replacement Therapy.

Dr. Swartz's service within the Division of Nephrology has been invaluable. He was the central foundation of our entire clinical operations for over three decades. Dr. Swartz served as medical director of acute dialysis (1977-2007), chief of clinic (1988-1991 and 2003-2010), director of the inpatient service (1996-2001), and chief of staff (1999-2003). He also contributed significantly as a member of the Medical School's Executive Committee for Clinical Affairs and the Institutional Review Board.

Dr. Swartz is the recipient of numerous awards including the Michigan Medicine Department of Internal Medicine H. Marvin Pollard Award for Outstanding Teaching of Residents and the National Kidney Foundation of Michigan's Distinguished Service Award. He has been listed as one of the "Best Doctors in America" every year since 2006.

Dr. Swartz's exceptional commitment to patient care and mentorship to trainees is what truly set him apart. Most of our senior clinical leadership have benefited from his tutelage over the past four decades. Dr. Swartz 's generous gift enabled the establishment of the Richard D. Swartz, MD, Collegiate Professorship in Nephrology, which honors a master clinician/educator nephrology faculty member dedicated to patient care and education."

He was loved and cherished by many people including his wife June, his children, Vaughn Swartz (Kelley) and Samuel Swartz (Jori); his grandchildren, Ari Swartz, Alexandra Swartz, Andrew Swartz, Liam Boyle, Ellen Boyle and Karen Boyle; and his siblings, Irving Swartz (Nancy), Shelly Denes (George) and Ellen Rosenthal (Douglas). He was also cherished by many loving nieces, nephews, other family members and friends.

A funeral service was held on Thursday, October 14 at the Temple Beth Emeth in Ann Arbor. ■

A CONVERSATION WITH
SCOTT ELLSWORTH
Historian & New York Times bestselling author

Monday, November 29 at 7:30 p.m.
in the Temple Beth Emeth Sanctuary
& Live Stream

Scott Ellsworth is the New York Times bestselling author of *The Ground Breaking: An American City and Its Search for Justice* (2021 National Book Award longlist) and *Death in a Promised Land*, his accounts of the 1921 Tulsa race massacre. Formerly a historian at the Smithsonian Institution, he has written about American history for The New York Times, The Washington Post, and the Los Angeles Times. He is also the author of *The Secret Game* (2016 PEN/ESPN Award for Literary Sports Writing) and *The World Beneath Their Feet*. Dr. Ellsworth lives in Ann Arbor, where he teaches in the Department of Afroamerican and African Studies at the University of Michigan.

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Venezuela has one of the world's most tight-knit Jewish communities. They are still mourning their Surfside victims.

Orge Castellano, CARACAS, Venezuela, originally for the JTA

The Champlain Towers building collapse in Surfside, Florida, impacted a range of communities whose members lived in the diverse Miami-Dade area: immigrants from across Latin America, Jewish retirees from the Northeast, Jews from Puerto Rico.

One of them still feeling the most pain months later is the Jewish community of Caracas, Venezuela's capital city.

In the wake of the collapse, seniors Christina Beatriz Elvira and Leon Oliwkowicz, both Venezuelan Jews, were among the first victims to have their remains recovered. Then came the bodies of Luis Sadovnic, Moises "El Chino" Rodán and Andres Levine. The three young men, who were all in their 20s, were raised in the small Jewish community surrounded by the lush El Ávila National Park in the heart of Caracas.

A view of the pool at the Hebraica social club in the Los Chorros area of Caracas. (Courtesy of Hebraica Caracas)

Miami had become an economic stepping stone and new home for the young Venezuelans, just as it had for hundreds of other community members over the past decade.

Many Jewish communities in Latin America are described as "tight knit," but Venezuela's is unique in the region for its intense closeness. Here everyone is part of one extended family — even though Venezuelan Jews often use the Hebrew word "kehilla," for community.

Few agreed to speak about the tragedy in its aftermath, or months later. They were instead focused on providing moral and financial support to family members of the victims.

But those who did speak to the Jewish Telegraphic Agency emphasized how strongly the deaths of their fellow community members reverberated throughout the country.

"The entire community feels this tragedy in the most innermost core of our beings," said Miguel Truzman, vice president of the Confederation of Jewish Associations of Venezuela, known by its Spanish acronym CAIV. "They were boys that we watched grow up; the whole community is deeply traumatized and devastated by this tragedy."

The Caracas area's Hebraica Jewish community center — the community's only social, cultural and religious center, which serves as a country club, sports facility, elementary school and meeting hub — put out a statement in July saying the Surfside events "will undoubtedly shape the rest of our lives."

Besides having shared a joint address at the Champlain Towers South condo building, the three young Venezuelans had another thing in common before moving to the U.S.: They all attended Colegio Moral y Luces Herzl-Bialik, a private Jewish high school now housed inside the Hebraica center, in Caracas' Los Chorros neighborhood.

Founded in 1946 by Ashkenazi emigres after quick growth in the community's population, the school has since served as a common link for almost all Venezuelan Jews, despite their religious denomination or ethnic background. It is one of the main pieces that contribute to the community's sense of unity.

"The Venezuelan Ashkenazim allowed the Sephardim to study in the school without the slightest problem. If you go to another Latin American country, like Mexico — or even around the world — every community, depending on their origin, has their own school," said Sami Rozenbaum, journalist and current editor-in-chief of Nuevo Mundo Israelita, or New Israelite World, the community's weekly newspaper.

A history of belonging, an uncertain future

The majority of the Jews left in Venezuela are either the children or grandchildren of European or Moroccan immigrants. Their ancestors mostly emigrated from the late 1930s through the late '60s. Newcomers quickly assimilated into mainstream Venezuelan society and never felt like outsiders, since the country was an ethnically and religiously diverse melting pot at the time. Antisemitism and racism were rarely major concerns for the community, and unlike Paraguay, Argentina, and Chile, the country has a much less significant history of harboring Nazi fugitives.

The Jewish newspaper, founded by Moisés Sananes in 1943 as *Mundo Israelita* (*Israelite World*), was the community's first systematic effort to unite both its Ashkenazi and Sephardic immigrants, before the Bialik school.

"Our community stands as a reference point in the world because of its integration. We are fully united. Here there's no distinction between who's from Ashkenazi or Sephardi ancestry. The only separate components are the synagogues and the religious and cultural traditions of each group," Rozenbaum said.

Although the community was officially established in the mid-19th century, it wasn't until 1939 that the country's first synagogue, El Conde Synagogue, was built. The temple, however, wouldn't last long, as the government at the time approved a series of urban restructuring projects in 1954, forcing it to be demolished. In 1963, the Sephardic community in Caracas inaugurated the Tiferet Israel Synagogue, the city's largest to date.

In recent years, the community has seen several of its members leave, as a stagnant socioeconomic and humanitarian crisis continues to drive a large-scale exodus from the oil-rich country. From a population peak of 25,000 in the early 1990s, Venezuelan Jewry has dwindled to fewer than 6,000 members, a decrease of 70%.

The country's hyperinflation, rampant violence, hunger and deepening poverty have forced many into a new diaspora. Nearly all of these Venezuelan Jewish immigrants have settled in the United States, Israel, Mexico and Panama.

Those who remain are predominantly Orthodox and live in Caracas, sometimes depending on each other for survival. Since there are so few left, nearly everyone in the community knows each other by name. Most of them consider themselves staunch Zionists.

The regime of the populist firebrand Hugo Chavez tried for years to plant anti-Israel sentiment into the political fabric of the predominantly Catholic nation, and sought to establish closer ties with Iran and Palestinian leadership. Nicolas Maduro, Chavez's successor, and his supporters have continued that legacy, but to a lesser extent.

According to the US State Department's 2020 Report on International Religious Freedom on Venezuela, "criticism of Israel in Maduro-controlled or -affiliated media continued to carry anti-Semitic overtones, sometimes disguised as anti-Zionist messages." Recent examples include Holocaust trivialization, as demonstrated by Maduro's comparison of US sanctions against Venezuela to Nazi persecution of Jews, and the promotion of conspiracy theories linking Israel and Jews to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Despite that, the government's rhetoric has not caught on with the Venezuelan population at large, which remains notably free of antisemitism.

"Venezuelans are not antisemitic. For example, if they see someone wearing a kippah on their head and do not know what it is, they'll ask you. The unfamiliar does not cause them estrangement but respect," said Isaac Cohen, chief rabbi of the Israelite Association of Venezuela (AIV), an umbrella organization representing Jews of Sephardic origin.

"The reason I have been here for 43 years is that I do not feel, nor have I experienced antisemitism. Although, of course, in Europe, there is cultural antisemitism, but here there is no such thing as an antisemitic culture."

Why some stay

Venezuelan Jews give two answers as to why they stay — both religious reasons, and economic ones.

"It's hard to start again and reinvent yourself from zero," said one community member who wished to remain anonymous for safety reasons, fearing government retribution. "Senior members stay because their home is here. They know that the same comfort and life they have in Venezuela would be hard to obtain somewhere else, especially if one has to learn another language, like English."

And even amid all the turmoil, observant Jews still thrive in Venezuela. They can practice their traditions openly and maintain a steady relationship with government authorities, who provide state-sponsored security in front of synagogues. Special food permits allow for the import and manufacture of kosher products.

"Venezuela is a great country. We remain here because of the hospitality and the generosity of its people," Cohen said. "In Venezuela, freedom of worship and whatever the community is willing to pursue is supported. So why move to another country? One decides to emigrate because there is antisemitism, or because commercially, it does not work; I am not a businessman. My job is to maintain and preserve the religion in the country."

Truzman agreed, saying that the fact that everyone attended the same school binds them together for life.

"Like me, there are thousands that have stayed. Why? Well, because it is our homeland, our country. We strive for whatever adverse circumstances there may be. We stay so that there is a presence of the Jewish community in Venezuela," he said.

"We have spent a lifetime together." ■

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Simchas and Sorrows

The Washtenaw Jewish community sends condolences to:

Susan Gross on the death of her sister, Florence Steinberg, September 14.

Paul Share on the death of his mother, Natalie Share, September 20.

The family of Richard Swartz, MD, who died October 11

The Washtenaw Jewish community sends mazel tovs to:

Ketl Freedman-Doan on the birth of her grandson, Lennox Charles Silcock. Born on Monday, September 20 to Rachel Freedman-Doan and Luke Silcock.

Roma Solent on the birth of her great-grandson, and Stephen Field and Irene Solent-Field on the birth of their grandson, Merrick Wolf Field. Born on August 28 to Matthew and Sarah Field of Iowa City, IA.

Shayna and Aaron Weiner on their B'nai Mitzvah, October 2

Grace Zirinsky on her Bat Mitzvah, October 9

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TheRide is developing its Long-Range Plan called TheRide 2045. This plan develops a vision for public transit in the Ann Arbor-Ypsilanti area for the next 25 years. Help us choose the best transit options by providing comments October 18–November 19. Learn more about TheRide 2045 at **TheRide.org** (**www.TheRide.org/about/projects/TheRide-2045**).

Join us to learn more at one of our meetings:

Virtual Zoom Meetings

Date	Time
October 26	6 pm
October 28	12 pm
November 3	12 pm
November 4	6 pm

In Person Meetings*

Meetings will be held at our Transit Centers.

Date	Time	Transit Center
November 8	1 pm–7 pm	Ypsilanti Transit Center
November 9	1 pm–7 pm	Blake Transit Center

If you can't attend a meeting, but would still like to provide your ideas:

- Visit: TheRide.org
- Email: 2045@TheRide.org
- Attend a Meeting (details above)
- Call: 734-794-1882
- Mail: AAATA c/o TheRide 2045, 2700 S. Industrial Hwy, Ann Arbor, MI 48104

**In person meetings subject to COVID safety protocols and subject to change*